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HISTORY

OF THE

Battle of Lake Erie,

(September 10, 1813,)

AND

REMINISCENCES

OF THE

FLAGSHIP "LAWRENCE,"

BY

CAPT. W. W. DOBBINS.

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ERIE, PA.:

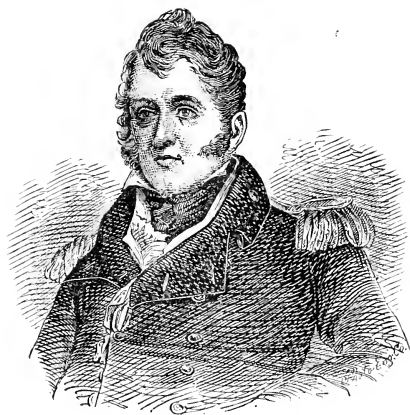
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*Your Old Servant*

*O. H. Perry*

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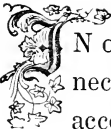
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## P R E F A C E .

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N offering this pamphlet to the public, it may be deemed necessary to offer some apology. There have been many accounts of Perry's Victory, Sept. 10th, 1813, published. Yet in consequence of the unfortunate feud existing between Perry and Elliott and their friends, the accounts partook somewhat of an *ex parte* character. This is not a correct way to hand down passing events to posterity. In writing history, facts should be given as nearly as possible, not fiction.

My father, Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins, was a pioneer in the construction of the squadron, and served actively upon the upper lakes during the war. From conversations during his lifetime, as also memoranda and other papers left by him—in connection with the accounts given by McKenzie, Cooper and Lossing, I have compiled this little book.

I hope the reader will excuse the commonplace style of composition, as it is the effort of an illiterate sailor.

W. W. DOBBINS.



# HISTORY OF THE Battle of Lake Erie,

*AND REMINISCENCES OF THE*  
Flagship "Lawrence."

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## CHAPTER I.

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AT THE time war was declared with Great Britain in 1812, the Canadian frontier was in advance of us in commerce and agriculture. A goodly portion of our supplies of merchandise, particularly groceries, came to us from Montreal. In regard to agriculture, the tory emigration from the United States at the commencement of, and during the Revolution, had done good work in this line, assisted by emigration from the old country, and the Canadian French. Then their military posts were well kept up, and having something of a Navy in the way of several heavily armed vessels, classed by the British Government as a "Provincial Navy," and not *regular*. These vessels also transported passengers and

merchandise. In another point of view, they were *well* prepared, viz : they were on the best of terms with the numerous tribes of Indians, not only in Canada, but many on this side of the line ; as the British Government pursued a course calculated to attach the Indians to their interests. Their treaties with their red brethern were always strictly kept, and no Indian agent was allowed to defraud them ; consequently their supplies were of the best. For one hundred years they have had little or no trouble with their Indians, although the British possessions are full of them. There the trader was safe at his post in the wilderness, and the Roman Catholic Priest on his mission through their midst. I would say here, how different has been the course and results with us since we have been a Government. The answer might be given thus :—badly kept treaties, corrupt Indian agents, miserable supplies, and a vacillating policy. Thus, the consequence is, bloody Indian wars, at a cost of thousands of lives and millions of money ; and, from the present out-look, no likelihood of getting better.

On the American side of the line, say from Black Rock on the Niagara River, to Sault St. Mary's River, the outlet of Lake Superior, things were in a poor condition to go to war with our neighbor. A sparsely settled country, with all the wants and deprivations incident thereto, full of wandering tribes of Indians, the object of whom was, with few exceptions, to watch the chances, and were ready the moment war commenced, to plunder and massacre. To show how deficient we were in the way of postal communication, the first news of the declaration of war along the frontier west of Black Rock, N. Y., was through Canadian dispatches to their several posts. When



Mackinaw was taken, the first notice of the declaration of war was a heavy force of British and Indians landing upon the eastern and uninhabited portion of the island in the night, and capturing the post without the firing of a gun.

But I have digressed from my proposed account of Perry's Victory, and will now begin with a short account of the early work of constructing and fitting out the squadron. In giving this matter, it is, in a measure, necessary to relate some of the incidents; and as Captain Daniel Dobbins, of Erie, was a pioneer in the construction of most of the vessels, it is well to give his early connection therewith.

In July, 1812, Captain Dobbins was at Mackinaw in command of a merchant vessel named the *Salina*, belonging to himself and a merchant of Erie, named R. S. Reed, and (who, together with a relative named W. W. Reed, were on board the vessel) was taken at the surrender of that post. His vessel, and one other of the captured, were made cartels to convey the prisoners and non-combatants to Cleveland, Ohio. Upon their arrival at Detroit, they were taken possession of by General Hull, and again fell into the hands of the enemy, on the surrender of that important post. Captain Dobbins now obtained a pass for himself and the two Reeds through the influence of Colonel Nichols, of his Majesty's service, (an old acquaintance previous to the war) and accompanied Colonel Lewis Cass and Captain Saunders, who were in charge of paroled prisoners surrendered at Detroit and at Van Horn's defeat, including the wounded—to be transported across the head of the lakes in open boats, to Cleveland. Passing from island to island, they arrived safely at Cleveland on the third

day, after a perilous voyage. Here, Cass and Saunders were in honor bound to destroy the boats, and Capt. D. navigated a small sloop bound down the lake. After alarming the inhabitants along the coast at the sight of a vessel, be she ever so small, after they had heard of Hull's surrender, he arrived safely at Erie. After remaining a few days with his family, he was sent with dispatches to Washington City by General David Mead, who was then in command of that post, and gave the first authentic information of the surrender of Mackinaw and Detroit at the seat of Government, having passed Colonel Cass, who was the bearer of dispatches from General Hull, sick by the way. Immediately upon his arrival a Cabinet meeting was held, to whom he gave a full account of matters, including the situation of the frontier, and the most suitable point for a naval depot upon the upper lakes. He recommended Erie, which was adopted. He was then solicited to accept a sailing master's position in the navy, which he accepted, and was at once ordered to Erie with instructions to immediately commence the construction of gun boats, which work he speedily began late in October following. Upon his arrival at Erie, was ordered to report to Commodore Chauncey at Sackett's Harbor, or to the commanding officer at Black Rock, for further instructions; which order he obeyed and received the following reply :

“BLACK ROCK, Oct. 2d, 1812.

“SIR:—Your letter of the 13th ultimo, directed to Commodore Chauncey or the commanding officer on Lake Erie, I have received, together with its enclosed—a copy of your instructions from the Honorable the Secretary of the Navy, each of which,

together with a copy of this letter, I have enclosed to him for his consideration.

"It appears to me utterly impossible to build gun boats at Presqu'ile. There is not a sufficient depth of water on the bar to get them into the lake. Should there be water, the place is at all times open to the attacks of the enemy, and in all probability when ready for action, ultimately will fall into the hands of the enemy, and be a great annoyance to our forces building and repairing at this place. From a slight acquaintance I have with our side of the lake, and with what information I have obtained from persons who have long navigated it, I am under the impression Lake Erie has not a single harbor calculated to fit out a naval expedition; and the only one convenient, I am at present at, which is in between Squaw Island and the Main, immediately in the mouth of Niagara River. I have no further communication to make upon the subject. Probably in a few days I shall be in possession of Commodore Chauncey's impressions, when you shall again hear from me.

"With esteem, yours, &c.,

"J. D. ELLIOTT, U. S. N.

"*Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins.*"

Mr. Dobbins (that being the modest title applied to sailing master) at once replied as follows, viz:

"ERIE, Oct. 11th, 1812.

"DEAR SIR:—Yours of the second inst. is received. In regard to the idea entertained by you, that this place is not a suitable one to build gun boats at, allow me to differ with you. There is a sufficiency of water on the bar to let them into the lake, but not a sufficiency to let heavy armed vessels of the enemy into the bay to destroy them. The bay is large and spacious, and completely land-locked, except at the entrance. I have made my arrangements in accordance with my own convictions, for the purpose of procuring the timber and other material for their construction. I believe I have as perfect a

knowledge of this lake as any other man on it, and I believe you would agree with me were you here, viz: That this is the place for a naval station.

"I remain yours, very respectfully, &c.,

"DANIEL DOBBINS, U. S. N.

"*Lieut. J. D. Elliott, U. S. N.*"

This letter from Elliott was the only information Mr. Dobbins got from that quarter; and not being satisfied, he hastened to Black Rock, where he found a Lieutenant Angus in command; and as he (Angus) had not heard from Commodore Chauncey, or from any other source, of the building of gun boats at Erie (Presqu'île) he was at a loss what course to pursue. Mr. Dobbins, however, employed a skillful ship carpenter—the only one to be obtained—and returned to Erie, determined to urge forward the work with such house carpenters and laborers as he could obtain. Feeling the importance of the occasion, and not receiving instructions from any quarter, he wrote the Department, asking for such, and for funds, having expended what he had at first received.

The work was now pushed as rapidly as possible, having received instructions and funds from the Department. The winter was a very severe one, which retarded the work in many respects. It being still urged at the Department that Black Rock was a more suitable place than Erie for a naval station, Mr. Dobbins wrote the Secretary upon the subject, of which the following is an extract:

"ERIE, December 19th, 1812.

"*To Hon. the Secretary of the Navy:*

"SIR: \* \* \* In regard to the vessels cut down, and in

an unfinished state at Black Rock, there can be but little confidence placed in their safety. The yard is within reach of the enemy's batteries, and if finished, the vessels could be cut to pieces in passing up the rapids into the lake." \* \* \*

It will be remembered that Commodore Chauncey commanded on Lake Erie as well as Ontario, and continued in command until after the battle, in fact, until April, 1814.

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## CHAPTER II.

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ABOUT the 1st of January, 1813, Chauncey, accompanied by Henry Eckford (Naval Constructor) officially visited Erie—approved the work of Mr. Dan'l Dobbins and gave instructions to get out timber, and prepare for the building of two "sloops of war;" which additional work was rapidly pushed, and the keels ready to lay, with much of the timber on hand, when Mr. Noah Brown, master ship builder from New York, with a gang of twenty-five carpenters, arrived about the 10th of March.

In a letter from Mr. Dobbins to the Department under date of March 14th, 1813, we find the following, viz: \* \* "The keels of the two sloops of war are ready to lay, with most of the timber on hand—the gun boats are ready for calking, and everything looks encouraging in that respect; and yet, I have

my fears of the secret incendiary, as well as the prowling spy of the enemy, and in an unguarded moment our labor may be destroyed. As a substitute for a guard, I have made arrangements with the workmen in the yard to stand guard until I hear from you. Mr. Brown joins me in my opinion in regard to the danger, and the course I intend to pursue." This guard, in connection with a well armed volunteer company commanded by Captain Thos. Forster, composed of sixty citizens, constituted for some time the only protection of the town and vessels on the stocks.

Commodore Perry arrived on the 27th from Black Rock, and at once assumed command. The defenceless condition of the vessels and the town at once claimed his attention, and he immediately sent for General Mead, the military commander in that portion of Pennsylvania; the result of which conference was the calling out of the military force under his command, or sufficient for a guard, and in a short time one thousand militia were in camp, which was ultimately reinforced by several hundred volunteers from the interior of the State.

Although Erie (Presqu'île) had twice been occupied as a military post—first by the French as early as 1760, and subsequently by the United States in 1798, and where the latter had a stockade-fort with three small block-houses and other military fixtures—yet not a single piece of ordnance remained, and the only thing in the shape of a *cannon* was a *small iron boat howitzer*, with which the villagers celebrated the Fourth of July, and other occasions, belonging to General Kelso, it having been found by him on the beach of the lake, where probably it had been left by the wrecking of an armed French batteau.

Nothing now remains of the French fort, but portions of some earthworks. The American fortifications, though gone to ruins, were put in condition and occupied.

In comparison with the great facilities for ship building of the present day, we can form but a remote idea of the difficulties Commodore Perry and his compeers had to encounter in building, and equipping, his squadron. All the carpenters and blacksmiths in the country having been employed by Mr. Dobbins in building the gun boats, and all the stores in the village ransacked for iron, and then forced to get the most of it from Pittsburgh, Commodore Perry found but little to work with, the great responsibility resting upon his shoulders, and the gigantic task before him. He, however, managed to get a small supply for immediate use from Pittsburgh and Buffalo. But the gallant young hero was equal to the task, and started into the work with all the energy and determination his future achievements demonstrated. He at once wrote the Secretary of the Navy what was immediately required, when carpenters and blacksmiths were ordered from Philadelphia. Mr. Dobbins was dispatched to Black Rock for seamen and chests of arms, and such ordnance as he could manage to transport, which was a heavy task, considering the bad condition of the roads incident to the breaking up of spring through a new country.

On the 30th of March, Sailing Master W. V. Taylor, a very skillful officer and thorough seaman, arrived from Sackett's Harbor, with twenty officers and seamen. Perry now determined to leave him in command and proceed to Pittsburgh, to hasten the workmen *en route* from Philadelphia, and make further arrangements for supplies. Upon his arrival at Pitts-

burgh made arrangements for canvas for the sails to be brought from Philadelphia, including cables, anchors and other supplies. He met with a Captain A. R. Woolley, an intelligent ordnance officer of the army, from whom he received valuable aid and advice in the way of procuring armament, and matters pertaining to it, and from whom he obtained four small field pieces, and some muskets. Captain Woolley also volunteered to supervise the casting of the carronades and shot, and other requisites. Perry started on his return to Erie on the 7th of April, and on his arrival found the work upon the vessels rapidly progressing; though Mr. Dobbins had been able to get through with but one 12-pounder from Buffalo, and three chests of muskets,—floods, sweeping away of bridges, and almost impassable roads having to be overcome. Perry now, in conjunction with General Mead, had a redoubt thrown up at the point where the land lighthouse now stands; and Mr. Dobbins having in the meantime arrived from Buffalo with two long 12-pounders, they were mounted upon it. On Garrison Hill another was thrown up, with the four pieces obtained at Pittsburgh mounted thereon. Perry also had a rude block house erected upon the bluff overlooking the yard where the large vessels were constructing, and where a brigade of troops were encamped. There was also another redoubt thrown up on the bluff commanding the yard where the gun boats were still on the stocks, with an encampment of troops to garrison it, and guns mounted as fast as they could be obtained from Buffalo.

The two “sloops of war” were built at the mouth of the Cascade Creek, about one mile above the village, as a greater



depth of water could be obtained at this point for launching. The gun boats were constructed upon a wide beach of the bay, at a point now known as "Reed's Dock," near the village.

Mr. Dobbins having been awarded the task of transporting the heavy ordnance from Black Rock, or the temporary naval station at Gonjaquades Creek, just below that place, to Erie ; and after managing to get a few through by land, notwithstanding the almost impassable roads, and then by open boats, as soon as the ice in the lake was out sufficiently for a passage, called forth the best energies of Mr. Dobbins, as it was done in the face of the enemy, they being aware of what was going on ; and as soon as the ice permitted, their spies were constantly on the lookout. As a sample of one of these hazardous trips, he started to bring up two long 32-pounders, weighing 3,600 pounds each. In the way of a craft, he was only able to procure an old "Derham boat," so-called, which had been used to boat salt from Schlosser to Fort Erie ; and after fitting her up as best he could, with timbers placed lengthwise in her bottom, got the guns on board, including a quantity of naval stores. When ready, tracked up the rapids of Niagara River and started for Erie, having a four-oared boat in company. He kept near the American shore, but dare not show his sail except at night. When off Cattaraugus, in the night, it came on to blow heavily from northwest, and in order to keep her off the beach, they made what sail they could with two planks for leaboards, and, after a struggle, succeeded in getting an offing. But their troubles were not ended : the great steering-oar unshipped, and the boat fell off into the trough of the sea. The heavy rolling soon carried away the step of the mast

before they could get the sail down. But the repairs were soon made and they got sail on again, when it was found she was leaking badly, caused by the heavy rolling, with so much weight in her bottom, and likely to founder. As the old maxim has it, "necessity is the mother of invention," Mr. Dobbins took a coil of rope they had on board, and passing the rope round and round her, from forward to aft, and heaving the turns taut with a gunner's hand spike, thus managing to keep her afloat, with all hands bailing. At daylight they found themselves some ten miles below Erie, with two of the enemy's cruisers in sight in the offing to windward. However, the wind had veered more to the eastward, and they made port with a fair wind—their consort, having parted company with them in the night, safely made port, and reported Mr. Dobbins' boat lost.

Gangs of additional carpenters, blacksmiths, sailmakers, riggers, &c., soon arrived from New York and Philadelphia and the work went bravely on.

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### CHAPTER III.

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ON THE 23d of May, Perry suddenly took his departure for Lake Ontario, taking Mr. Dobbins with him, and leaving Sailing Master Taylor in command at Erie. They left that

evening in a four-oared boat. At the contemplated sortie upon Fort George, Perry having been offered by Chauncey the command of the seamen and marines that might land. After a trip full of discomforts and dangers, they reached Schlosser on the third day. It being impossible to get a conveyance from there, Mr. Dobbins managed to procure an old Canadian pony, and an old saddle, with a rope girth, which the sailors had fitted from the painter of the boat. On this old Rosinant Perry mounted, *in full uniform*. Mr. Dobbins smiled at the Quixotic appearance of his chief, as also did Perry, and pleasantly remarking, "Any port in a storm, Mr. Dobbins; this is the best we can do." Mr. Dobbins advised him to take the boat's crew with him as a guard, the banks of the river being infested with prowling Indians and spies, but he refused, however allowing Mr. Dobbins to accompany him on foot for some distance, both being armed. Perry then gave Mr. Dobbins orders to return to Schlosser and procure boats to take up a draft of seamen to Black Rock, which he said would be sent up in a few days, or directly after the affair of Fort George.

On the 27th of May, Fort George fell. The part Perry bore in this telling capture is a matter of history; and the first twig of the cluster of laurels, soon to adorn his brow.

On the 28th, the detachment of officers and men arrived at Schlosser, and were immediately embarked for Black Rock, where they arrived the next day; Perry had already arrived at Black Rock, having gone up by land. After the capture of Fort George, the enemy evacuated the Niagara frontier to a great extent, and Perry at once determined to get the vessels purchased by the Government and prepared for

war purposes by Henry Eckford, and blockaded in Gonjaquades Creek by the batteries of the enemy on the opposite shore, up to Erie, if possible. At once the guns were dismounted on the batteries, and mounted upon the vessels, and the naval stores got on board. On the 6th of June, the vessels being ready, the tedious work of tracking them up the rapids commenced. This arduous task lasted a week. In addition to ox-teams and sailors, they had the assistance of two hundred soldiers, under the command of Captains Brevoort and Youngs. On the morning of the 13th, the last vessel got safely out of the rapids. The officers and soldiers detailed by General Dearbourn to assist in getting the vessels up the rapids, were, at the request of Perry, allowed to remain on board to assist in navigating and defending the vessels on their passage to Erie. This little flotilla was composed of the following vessels, viz: Brig "Caledonia," (prize) armament two long 24-pounders and one long 12-pounder; schooner "Samers," (formerly "Catherine") two long 18-pounders; sloop "Trippe," (formerly "Contractor") one long 24-pounder; schooner "Ohio," one long 24-pounder; schooner "Amelia," one long 24-pounder.

I have not the names of the commanders at hand, except that the "Caledonia" was made the flagship for the time, and of course was commanded by Perry, the "Ohio" by Mr. Dobbins; the rest of the commanders were ordered from Erie.

On the evening of the 15th they sailed for Erie, but were driven back by a heavy wind the next day. On that evening they sailed again. Great vigilance was necessary in order to elude the fleet of the enemy then cruising at the foot of the lake, and constantly on the lookout for them. The British

fleet consisted of the following vessels, viz: "Queen Charlotte," armament 17 guns; "Lady Provost," 13 guns; "Hunter," 10 guns; "Little Belt," 3 guns; schooner "Chippewa," 1 gun. Had they encountered our little flotilla there would have been some warm work, but the disparity of force was too great, consequently, victory would have been with them, and British ascendancy on the upper lakes would have been prolonged. However, fortune favored the gallant Perry, and he managed to elude them. So near were they to meeting, that when off Dunkirk, the wind being light ahead, and the weather hazy, Perry anchored his vessels close in shore in order not to be seen from the offing. While there, a man made his appearance on the bank of the lake and made signals. Perry sent a boat for him, when he gave the information that the enemy had been at anchor the night before off the 20 mile creek below Erie, and sent on shore to get fresh supplies—that from an intermediate point he could see both fleets at the same time. But good luck was on our side; Perry with his little squadron entered the harbor of Erie, all safe, on the morning of the 19th of June. Every preparation and precaution had been attended to by the ever vigilant young hero. He had arranged a line of battle, when sailing abreast or in line; also a code of signals, which were as follows:

"One gun—Underway to get.

Green at the fore—Form the order of sailing ahead.

Green at the main—Form the order of sailing abreast.

Green at the main peak—Form the order of battle on the starboard tack.

Green in the fore rigging—Form the order of battle on the larboard tack.

Green in the main rigging—Close more the present order.

White at the fore—Open more the present order.

White at the main—Tack.

White at the main peak—Follow the motions of the flagship.

Ensign at the main gaff—Engage the enemy.

White at the main, with stop in the middle—Chase.

Ensign in the fore rigging—Repair on board flagship, all Commanders.

Green and white at the main gaff—Come within hail.

It is expected Commanders will pay strict attention to the order of sailing.

No property other than public, or passengers to be received on board any of the vessels under my command.

O. H. PERRY."

When at the lower end of the lake, the British squadron usually rendezvoused at what is known as "Mohawk Bay" below Grand River. This is an indentation of the main, with a small island in front, and a long reef extending off to the eastward—making a fine lea, with sea room inside and good holding ground. From here they would sail to keep watch of the movements on the American side. They were *rampant* on hearing of Perry arriving safely at Erie with his little fleet, despite their vigilance.

The vessels to comprise the squadron were now all within the bay at Erie, and the equipping and arming went on rapidly. The court house had been converted into a sail loft; the sails were nearly completed, while the rigging was being fitted on board the vessels.

It will be remembered that Commodore Chauncey was the senior officer on Lake Erie as well as Ontario; and that everything of importance connected with building and equipping the squadron had to come through him, instead of coming direct to Perry from the Department. Thus the delay of many

matters, particularly in procuring crews for the vessels.

The two "sloops of war"—afterward named "Lawrence" and "Niagara"—were built after the same models, being 100 feet straight rabbit, 110 feet between the perpendiculars, 30 feet beam, and 9 feet hold, flush deck, and pierced for 20 guns with two stern ports. Mr. Brown, the efficient and enterprising master builder, gave them this shallow depth of hold in order to have a good height of "quarters" or bulwarks, and at the same time avoid showing a high side above the water, and also to secure a light draught of water. They were hastily constructed of such timber as came handy, though staunchly built. In the language of Mr. Brown to one of the workmen, who was somewhat particular in finishing his job, "We want no extras—plain work is all that is required; they will only be wanted for one battle; if we win, that is all that is wanted of them; if the enemy are victorious, the work is good enough to be captured."

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## CHAPTER IV.

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**A**N ERROR has got into some accounts of the old ship's name—claiming it as "St. Lawrence," after the river of that name, as the other vessel was named "Niagara" after the Niagara River. The name was given by the Navy Department

in honor of Captain James Lawrence, who fell mortally wounded while in command of the frigate "Chesapeake" in her unfortunate encounter with the British frigate "Shannon;" and Perry adopted Lawrence's last words as a motto for his fighting flag, viz: "*Don't give up the Ship.*"

The schooner "Ariel" (of pilot boat model) and "Scorpion" were about 63 tons burden; the "Porcupine" and "Tigress" about 52 tons. The tonnage of the vessels brought from Black Rock were as follows, viz: Brig "Caledonia" (captured by Lieutenant Elliot from under the guns of Fort Erie) was 85 tons; schooner "Somers," 65 tons; sloop "Trippe," 63 tons; schooner "Ohio," 62 tons; schooner "Amelia," 72 tons. This latter vessel was condemned on examination after reaching Erie, and sunk in the harbor.

The gun boats being completed, were launched about the last of April—immediately fitted out, armed, and rendezvoused with the other vessels in the vicinity of the yard where the sloops of war were on the stocks, to defend them in case of an attack.

There appears some discrepancy between authors and those who should have a correct knowledge of the date when the "Lawrence" and "Niagara" were launched. Mackenzie has it "on the 24th of May," and most accounts have adopted that date. From circumstances, and in fact, *direct data*, as also the opinion of living witnesses who were connected with their construction, the "Lawrence" was launched on or about the 25th of June, and the "Niagara" on the 4th of July.

Full crews for the vessels was now the important matter, and up to the 25th of June, there had been but



about one hundred and fifty men and officers received from Lake Ontario, the point they were expected from, and many of these were on the sick list. Perry was every day receiving communications from the Navy Department, urging him to hasten the equipment of his squadron, so as to act in conjunction with General Harrison, in a combined movement against the enemy by land and water. This was very perplexing to Perry, as he was short of officers and men ; and to make matters worse, the 200 soldiers, with Captains Brevoort and Youngs, whom had gone up in the vessels from Black Rock to Erie, and Perry had made application to retain, and be distributed through the squadron as *marines*, were recalled to Black Rock. On the 10th of July, Perry had received a letter from General Dearbourn, saying, "by order of the War Department, the officers and soldiers must return," excepting Captain Brevoort, whom he permitted to remain, as Captain B. had navigated the lakes several years in command of the brig "Adams" under the auspices of the War Department, and would be of great service. The troops were sent off immediately in boats under the command of Captain Youngs. This was a sad blow to Perry. However, after writing urgent letters to Chauncey, he got news of a draft of men and officers being forwarded, and on the 17th dispatched Mr. Dobbins with two boats—to be joined by others at Buffalo, and bring them to Erie. The following is the order :

"ERIE, July 17th, 1813.

"SIR:—You will repair to Buffalo with the two boats, and there wait until the officers and men destined for the vessels of war at this place, arrive. You will upon your arrival at Buffalo endeavor to collect, in conjunction with Mr. Carter, boats, in

addition to the four belonging to the Navy, for the transportation of the men, say three or four hundred, from that place to Erie. The boats to be collected at Buffalo Creek. Great caution will be necessary on your way up, to prevent being intercepted by the enemy. Should they appear off this harbor, I will send an express to Cattaraugus and the 20 mile creek, to give you information.

“Very respectfully, &c.,

“O. H. PERRY.

“*Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins.*”

As an excuse for frequently mentioning the name of Sailing Master Dobbins, will state, that I have his papers and memoranda made at the time; and as he was actively engaged in getting up and equipping the squadron, and in operations on the upper lakes during the war, valuable information is obtained therefrom; including the fact that he was the only officer at the time who was familiar with the navigation and coast on both sides. Thus, he was invariably detailed for duty on all occasions away from Erie, requiring a knowledge of the navigation, locality, and people; as also a good proportion of self-reliance and experience. Perry's officers were mostly young, without a knowledge of the lake navigation and the difficulties incident thereto, though *at home* upon the deck of a man-of-war at sea. The average age of Perry's officers is given by Dr Usher Parsons, the medical officer of the flagship “Lawrence,” viz: “The average age of the commissioned officers of Perry's squadron was less than twenty-three; the average age of the warrant officers was less than twenty years.”

CHAPTER V.

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BY THE 25th of July the vessels were completed, and armed, but only partially officered and manned.. At the same time Perry was in frequent receipt of communications from the Department and General Harrison, urging him to a forward movement; and to add still more to Perry's anxiety, Harrison informed him, "The enemy would in a few days launch their new ship "Detroit," and had just received a reinforcement of experienced officers and prime seamen." This was truly annoying to Perry, as his vessels were not fully manned; however, those he had were being well disciplined. Everything in the way of completion and preparation was fully attended to. The supplies of ammunition, stores, &c., were stowed temporarily, to get the best trim of the vessels. This was done that everything could be replaced with alacrity, as they would have to be taken on shore in getting the large vessels over the bar.

The enemy made frequent visits near the roadstead off the harbor, and sometimes the "Queen Charlotte" would visit alone. At other times the whole squadron would make the menace. On the 21st of July, they made one of these "calls," when the gun boats ran down to the bar at the entrance, and exchanged shots with them, with but little effect, on *our side* at least, when they bade adieu, and squared away for Canada, probably to report.

Previous to the war the English had upon the lakes what they termed a "Provincial Marine;" the vessels had a light

armament, and were used to transport troops, Indian goods, and frequently individual property, as there were but few merchant vessels at that period ; several of the British squadron were of this class, though they had subsequently been refitted and armed.

Here again was a lack of knowledge of the frontier on the part of the Government. The naval force upon Lake Erie should *at first* have been placed under a separate command, as Chauncey had his hands full upon Lake Ontario, and of course could give but little attention to the operations on Lake Erie. Again, the men should have been sent direct from Philadelphia, instead of round by New York and Sackett's Harbor to Erie—making nearly double the distance. Many of the carpenters, sailmakers, blockmakers, &c., came from Philadelphia, then why not the seamen? Had this course been pursued, Perry would have been on the lake with his squadron and captured the enemy's fleet before they could have got out their large ship, "Detroit;" as also have co-operated with Harrison, and relieved the western end of the lake of the continued harassing they suffered. Once supreme upon the lake, the enemy would have withdrawn his forces to Malden and the Detroit River. Perry having established a recruiting station on shore to enlist landsmen from the troops, with the permission of the commanding officer, had succeeded in getting about one hundred. In the meantime, Lieutenant John Brooks, Perry's chief marine officer, had enlisted some forty men as marines. Perry now concluded he had enough—some three hundred, after landing the invalids—to cope with the enemy before they got their new ship ("Detroit") out; and a further incentive for a forward

move, was that there was a report that the enemy were endeavoring to concentrate a heavy force at Long Point, from whence the troops were to be transported with the fleet to some point near Erie, where the troops and Indians were to be landed and act in conjunction with their fleet in an attempt to destroy the village and vessels. Perry hastily informed the Department that he apprehended no danger of their getting possession of the vessels, provided they did capture the village, as the vessels were off at anchor in the bay, where their fleet could not enter, and he could defend them against an attack from the shore.

The enemy not being in the offing, and everything being ready for a move, Perry got his vessels under way and moved down to the entrance of the channel, when preparations were immediately made for getting the heavy vessels over the bar. This was on Sunday, August 1st. In the afternoon General Mead and staff visited the *Lawrence*, and were received with a salute. The General was much pleased with the warlike appearance of the vessels, particularly the "*Lawrence*" and "*Niagara*." The General had rendered valuable services in various ways in the building of the squadron, and in preparations for their defense; and Perry availed himself of this opportunity to tender him hearty thanks, not only on his own account, but in behalf of the Navy Department.

The "*Lawrence*" and "*Niagara*" were twin vessels in every respect—built from the same models, fitted and armed alike, and were full-rigged brigs. At the present day they would be considered *small*, but at that period they were *immense*. The people from the interior, on hearing the report of the guns in

firing the salute for General Mead, hastened to the village, expecting that the enemy was making an attack. The large vessels were a great curiosity, and looked formidable, in their eyes, in comparison with the small craft they had been accustomed to see; and the *big guns* were giants of destruction in their estimation. They felt proud of the formidable appearance of our "war ships," and rejoiced that we now had a naval force able to cope with the British fleet, which had so long controled the lakes, and menaced us so frequently—"Could meet the enemy and make them ours." They felt that there would soon be an end to the frequent alarms, and the imaginary war-whoop of the Indian would no longer haunt their midnight slumbers. They could now go to their homes and feel a security they had not felt for the last year.

Early on the morning of the 2d, Mr. Dobbins took charge of the "Lawrence" as pilot, and kedged her to the entrance of the channel, he having sounded and buoyed it out the day before. The water was found to be quite low, in consequence of the east wind. The "Niagara" was then kedged up near the bar and moored with springs upon her cables, her port broadside facing the roadstead. The smaller vessels were then moored in a somewhat similar manner, and preparations made to defend the "Lawrence" while on the bar. The work of getting out the guns, ballast, and other heavy matter went on briskly on board the "Lawrence," and in three hours everything was removed to the sand beach, the guns being rolled up on timbers so that they could be quickly reshipped should occasion require. The fallacious yarn of the guns being "hoisted out with the charges in them and placed in boats which were

dropped astern," is novel in the extreme, and does injustice to the intelligence of Perry. The absurdity, if not *danger*, of rousing *loaded guns* about in this way, particularly amongst the sand, must be obvious to any one, but more particularly to those familiar with handling and practicing with ordnance. This attempt to show extraordinary preparation for an attack condemns itself, as it is well known it takes but a few moments to load a gun with prepared ammunition. Again, it has been recorded that a "water battery of three long 12-pounders had been mounted upon the beach," &c. This is also error; they were mounted in the redoubt on the bank of the lake, where the land lighthouse now stands, some 100 feet above the water, and completely commanding the channel. There was also the "field battery" on Garrison hill, directly abreast of the channel. The "camels" were immediately got alongside of the "Lawrence," timbers placed athwart the vessel, with the ends resting upon the "camels," and the necessary preparations made for lifting.

These "camels" were an invention of Mr. Brown; were oblong, with square ends, 90 feet long, 40 feet wide, and six feet depth of hold, with a strong deck. They had two holes cut through the bottom, six inches square, with curbs to guide the long plugs to the holes when required. The "camels" were placed one on each side, as before stated, the plugs taken out and the "camels" filled, the heavy timbers thrust through the port-holes, the blocking and lashing secured, when the holes were plugged up, and the pumps set at work. Thus, as the water was discharged, the vessel was lifted. Owing to continued easterly winds, causing low water, the operations

with the "camels" had to be repeated before the "Lawrence" could be floated. After a laborious task, night and day, she was got over on the morning of the 4th, and towed out to her anchorage. As a sample of the never-flagging energy of Perry, by two o'clock P. M. everything was replaced, guns mounted, a salute fired, and she ready for action. The "Niagara" was now towed to the entrance of the channel, and preparations made to lighten her, while the "camels" were being prepared for their work.

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## CHAPTER VI.

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IN THE meantime, early in the morning, the enemy made their appearance in the offing, and hove-to to reconnoitre, when about eight miles out. The smaller vessels having been taken over the bar with but little trouble, were all anchored with the "Lawrence;" the wind was from the southeast and weather hazy. Perry, expecting them to attack, made hasty arrangements to give them as warm a reception as possible; and, if necessary, to run the "Lawrence" ashore under the guns of the battery on the bank, which, with the field battery on Garrison hill, and many of the "Niagara's" guns (the balance being still on board) which had been hastily mounted upon the beach, including the heavy guns of the smaller ves-



sels, the enemy would have had their hands full. After reconnoitering for an hour or so, they bore up and stood across the lake. At this moment Mr. Dobbins had arrived alongside with a launch loaded with shot. Perry called him aft to make enquiries in regard to the appearance of the coast from the offing, he (Perry) having never had an opportunity to observe. Mr. D. told him "The shoreline would show quite indistinct at the distance the enemy were out, in consequence of the hazy weather and the high land in the rear; he then called Perry's attention to the fact that the vessels were all heading the same course of the "Niagara," and she hard aground on the bar. Perry at once exclaimed, "They have been deceived—they think the vessels are all over the bar, but not quite ready; bear a hand sir with the lighters—hurry up everything on the beach," &c. Perry wishing to know the course they would take, dispatched the schooner "Ariel," Lieutenant Packett, to follow them at a distance and ascertain, if possible. On the return of the "Ariel" Packett reported that they had gone to Long Point, which was afterwards ascertained to be the fact. It was afterwards known, also, that after landing a courier they bore up the lake for Malden, and never showed themselves outside of the mouth of Detroit River until their encounter with our squadron on the 10th of September.

Some authors have it, that "Perry sent out the schooners "Scorpion," Sailing Master Champlain, and "Ariel," Lieutenant Packett, to annoy the enemy at long shot, and keep them at bay," &c. This is error; the above is correct. The *absence* of the enemy was more to the liking of the gallant Perry than their *presence* at this particular time. It would have been con-

sidered an absurdity to send two small schooners off into the lake to "annoy and keep at bay" the whole British fleet. Should they have got within range of the enemy, they must necessarily be within range of the enemy's long guns; and a *little crippling* of the schooners would be sure to lead to capture, as the wind was ahead to return. Besides, by being delayed, they might have discovered the true position of our vessels; as the sun rose it would clear away the haze, with probably a shift of wind, when the vessels afloat would swing to the wind and show the position of the "Niagara." This would be poor strategy, and Perry knew his business better than to adopt such. These facts have been stated to the writer by Mr. Dobbins—and he has heard other officers conversing upon the subject, including Lieutenant Packett. Besides all this, Mr. D., in a conversation with Lieutenant Rollett, a Provincial officer in his Majesty's service, with whom he was acquainted previous to the war, says he "was attached to the "Lady Provost" at this time, and that they *were deceived* precisely in the same relation Perry had conjectured—that they well knew the purpose for which the "Ariel" had been sent out, and endeavored to deceive her until she was well out of sight on her return."

The enemy having made off, the work of lightening on board the "Niagara" went on rapidly—in a few hours everything was on the beach, and the "camels" at work. In the meantime the wind had shifted to the westward, which raised the water, and the next day she was floated, armed, and fully equipped for battle. The schooners "Ohio" and "Amelia" were left inside for the present, the "Amelia" being condemned as unseaworthy.

Perry now had his squadron all safely in the lake, and, with the exception of the proper complement of men, was ready to meet the enemy.

When the British squadron had made their last visit but one to Erie, they went to Port Dover, on the Main, in the rear of Long Point, where Commodore Barclay and officers had been invited to dine with the inhabitants. In reply to a complimentary toast, Barclay said, "I expect to find the Yankee brigs hard and fast aground on the bar at Erie when I return; in which predicament it will be but a short job to destroy them." The result of this "return" I have already stated. However, had he made the attempt, he would have found it more of a "job" than he anticipated.

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## CHAPTER VII.

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THE whole country was in a blaze of glory over the victory of the 10th of September, and yet Perry was deserving of full as much credit for having got up his squadron under such unfavorable circumstances. Had the Government placed the operations on the upper lakes under a *separate* command, many of the difficulties would have been obviated. It is but natural to presume that Chauncey would not send *full supplies* from Lake Ontario, unless there was a surplus over and above

a sufficiency to fully arm, equip, officer and man his own *immediate* command; consequently Perry usually received but a scanty share. And, to make matters worse, seamen on the seaboard were averse to this lake service, and volunteering was up-hill business. These were some of the many difficulties Perry had to labor under; and frequent appeals to Chauncey had but little effect. Although but twenty-seven years of age, Perry had the decision of character and promptness to act of a veteran—to give or obey an order was imperative. Of a sedate and serious turn of mind, he never was addicted to profanity or light levity; of courteous and charitable impulses, his deportment was such as to command respect under all circumstances.

The squadron being fully armed and equipped, but only about half manned, and many of these enlisted from the militia, and receiving, almost daily, communications from the Department and General Harrison urging him to move and co-operate with Harrison, and those from the Department almost amounting to *censure*, his state of mind can well be imagined. Overworked in both body and mind, it is astonishing that he did not break down under his troubles. However, he was determined to *do his duty* to his country, and make the best of the circumstances.

It was now ascertained through General Porter, of Black Rock, that the enemy were concentrating a force at Port Dover or Long Point, to be moved by, and act in conjunction with, their squadron in a move upon Erie. However, it failed for the want of a sufficiency of troops at the proper time.

Perry determined not to be idle while waiting for officers

and men, and concluding he could cope with the enemy before they got their new heavy ship out, made ready to sail for Long Point and the Canada shore in pursuit. His vessels being but half manned, he got a supply of volunteers from the army, and sailed at four o'clock A. M. on the 6th of August. The commanders of the several vessels on this short cruise were as follows, viz: "Lawrence," (flagship) Commodore Perry; "Niagara," Lieutenant Daniel Turner; "Caledonia," Purser Humphrey Magrath; "Ariel," Acting Lieutenant John Packet; "Scorpion," Sailing Master Stephen Champlin; "Somers," Sailing Master Thomas Almy; "Tigress," Master's Mate A. McDonald; "Porcupine," Midshipman George Senat. The "Ohio" and "Trippe" were left behind for want of crews. Upon reaching Long Point, and seeing nothing of the enemy, stood for the mainland, and after sweeping the coast for some distance and making no discoveries returned to their anchorage at Erie and awaited the expected reinforcements.

Immediately preparations were made for another cruise, and during the 7th and 8th provisions and stores were got on board. It has been said by some authors, that a large amount of military stores for General Harrison's army at Sandusky were taken on board. This is erroneous; there were but little, if any such at Erie, and furthermore, the vessels had only capacity for their own supplies, and berth-deck room for their crews—to say nothing of their expecting to meet the enemy on the cruise up the Lakes; and with the vessels hampered up with extra stores, of course their efficiency would be very much decreased.

Perry now hesitated about assuming the responsibility of

encountering the enemy with his vessels but half manned, particularly as they would be soon reinforced by their new ship "Detroit," and was discussing the matter with Purser Hamilton at his lodgings on shore, when Midshipman John B. Montgomery made his appearance and presented him a letter from Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliot, then on his way to join the squadron with a number of officers and ninety men. This was joyful news for Perry, and he immediately repaired on board, to dispatch the "Ariel," Lieutenant Packet, down the coast to meet them and hasten their arrival. The "Ariel" returned on the 10th, and the officers and men were immediately distributed among the squadron. They proved to be a much superior class to those previously recieved, which was very gratifying to Perry. Elliot immediately superseded Turner in command of the "Niagara."

At this time the commissions, which had been made out for some time, were received via. Commodore Chauncey. By these changes, Elliot became Master-Commander, (the same grade as Perry) Holdup, Packett, Yarnell, Edwards, and Conkling, were promoted to the rank of Lieutenant—they having been previously acting as such.

Mr. Dobbins, who had been actively engaged on general duty while getting the vessels over the bar, was now ordered to the "Ohio," to "get her over the bar as soon as possible, and to engage three good pilots immediately." The pilots engaged were Azial Wilkinson, James Lee, and one other, the name not remembered.

The squadron now being ready sailed on a course to the head of the lake on the morning of the 12th of August, and

consisted of the following vessels, including their commanders and armament, viz: "Lawrence," (flagship) eighteen 32-pound canonades and two long 12-pounders, Commodore O. H. Perry; "Niagara," same armament, Captain Jesse D. Elliot; "Caledonia," three long 12-pounders, Purser Humphrey Magrath; "Ariel," four long 12-pounders, Lieutenant John Packett; "Trippe," one long 32-pounder, Lieutenant Joseph E. Smith; "Tigress," one long 32-pounder, Lieutenant A. H. M. Conkling; "Somers," one long 24-pounder and one long 12-pounder, Sailing Master Thomas C. Almy; "Scorpion," one long 24-pounder and one long 12-pounder, Sailing Master Stephen Champlin; "Ohio," one long 24-pounder, Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins; "Porcupine," one long 32-pounder, Midshipman George Senat. The order of sailing, attack, recognition in the night, &c., was fully and ingeniously arranged, much to the credit of so young a commander.

On the 16th, the squadron arrived off Cunningham's (Kelly's) Island, without having seen or heard of the enemy. The wind was ahead, and as the vessels were working up there was a small schooner discovered coming out of Put-in-Bay, when the "Scorpion," being a fast sailor, gave chase, and would have captured her, but, unfortunately, grounded on a reef off Middle Boss Island, and the little craft made good her escape to Canada. She proved afterwards to be the "Ottawa," previously captured at Maumee, and was cruising among the islands to watch the motions of our vessels.

The next day the squadron anchored off Sandusky, and Perry dispatched an officer with a boat to Lower Sandusky to inform General Harrison of his arrival with the squadron. On

the day following the General and staff, including Colonels Cass, McArthur and Gaines, as also Major Craghan, and some twenty chiefs of the Wyandotte, Shawnee, and Delaware Indians, came down. Among the chiefs were Crane, Blackfoot, Captain Tommy, and others. The object of bringing down the Indians was that they might see the "big canoes" and the "big guns," and then report to those of their tribes who had joined the enemy, what they might expect when a fight took place. The Indians expressed great astonishment, more particularly when the salute was fired in honor of General Harrison's visit. After due consideration it was agreed to make Put-in-Bay the present rendezvous, to which place Perry moved with his squadron and Harrison and party returned to camp.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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ON THE 25th, Perry got underway with his squadron from Put-in-Bay, and stood across the head of the lake for Malden, to see if he could not draw the enemy out. He discovered them at anchor inside of Bar Point, and directly in the mouth of Detroit River, and there being a heavy battery on Bar Point, within range, he concluded it to be not practicable to make an attack at this time. He could see from the offing that they were not yet reinforced by their new ship.



At this juncture much sickness was in the squadron, consisting of bilious fever, dysentery, and chills; those mostly affected were from the seaboard. The change from salt to fresh water, coupled with impure salt provisions and few vegetables, was fruitful of disease, and Perry was taken down *himself*, and a number of his officers, including Surgeons Barton and Parsons; the latter, with honorable self-devotion, continued his work, though he had to be carried in a cot to visit the sick.

On the 31st the squadron received a welcome reinforcement from General Harrison's army, in the way of fifty volunteers, including several officers and one doctor, viz: W. T. Taliaffero. They were mostly from Kentucky, and many of them had been boatmen on the Western rivers, which, as "watermen," gave them a slight knowledge of the duties they were required to perform. They were immediately distributed throughout the squadron to serve as "marines," in place of the "marine guard" which had been promised from Lake Ontario. This brought the muster-roll up to about 490, all told. Great attention was paid to drilling the men in their various duties, and in making every preparation for battle, as it was daily anticipated. Perry became convalescent after a week's confinement, and was able to take the deck again, and got the squadron underway for a second visit to Malden. On his arrival off that place he found they had their new ship "Detroit" fully equipped and at anchor with the rest of their squadron. Perry stood off and on all day, but they did not accept his banter, so he bore away for Sandusky again to communicate with Harrison. Upon his return he found letters from the Secretary of

the Navy, the contents of which were a source of mortification. It appeared the frequent calls upon Chauncey for reinforcements had prompted that officer to answer with a pungent and sarcastic letter. This so offended Perry that he applied to be "detached from the command on Lake Erie"—assigning as a reason that "it was unpleasant to serve under a commander who had so little regard for his feelings," &c. These letters from the Secretary, though rebuking him for his frequent calls for officers and men, and also somewhat censuring him for what the Department deemed "extravagant expenditures," closed with an appeal to his patriotism, and soothed his lacerated feelings with assurances of the confidence the Department reposed in him, and at the same counseled conciliation with Chauncey. On the same day he answered with a temperate and respectful reply, vindicating his conduct and rebutting the charges brought against him; the effect of which was to not only satisfy the Secretary, but finally restored kindly relations between Chauncey and himself.

Some change of officers now took place; Lieutenant Smith was ordered to the "Niagara," and Lieutenant Turner to the command of the "Caledonia," Magrath to the "Niagara," in his legitimate capacity as Purser, and Lieutenant Holdup to the command of the "Trippe." Mr. Dobbins had been dispatched to Erie for supplies and armament, as per the following order:

"U. S. S. LAWRENCE, }  
"OFF SANDUSKY, August 22d, 1813. }

"SIR:—You will proceed with the "Ohio" to Erie for the purpose of taking on board that vessel provisions and such

other articles as are mentioned in the several requisitions you have in your possession.

"You will use every exertion to return to this place with all possible speed; and on not finding the squadron at this place you will proceed to Put-in-Bay and there await our arrival.

"Very respectfully, &c.,

"O. H. PERRY.

"*Sailing Master Dobbins, commanding Schooner 'Ohio.'*"

The following signals were to be observed:

"OFF SANDUSKY, August 22d, 1813.

"On the appearance of any of the U. S. vessels of war off this place she will hoist her ensign at the main masthead and fire a gun. After an interval of ten minutes she will fire two guns.

"O. H. PERRY.

"*U. S. Schooner, Ohio.'*"

The "Ohio" returned to Sandusky on the 3d of September, without meeting with any of the enemy's cruisers or other mishap, and was immediately dispatched on a similar trip, as the stock of provisions was small, and the beef not fit for use. The beef and pork had been put up in haste by the contractors at Erie, and, of course, *carelessly*, consequently it had nearly all become putrid when exposed to summer weather. (The "Ohio" was at anchor in the roadstead at Erie taking in armament and stores on the day of the battle, and Mr. Dobbins distinctly heard the cannonading.)

The season being too far advanced for a lengthy campaign, and the enemy's squadron showing no disposition for an immediate encounter, the matter was canvassed in regard to making a combined attack upon Malden with our naval and military

forces. The most favored project was to transport the forces of Harrison to one of the islands near the Canada shore, and from thence, transported in a body, via the vessels of the squadron, including boats, to some point in Pigeon Bay, say twenty miles below Malden, and move upon that post. After landing the troops the squadron was to stand up to the river and attack their vessels at anchor, provided their squadron did not *previously* come out and attack. However, the project was given up as impracticable.

At this time three men, favorable to our cause, made their escape from Malden and communicated to Perry much valuable information, viz: That the forces at Malden were very short of provisions; and that a council of military and naval commanders was held, and determined their squadron should sail and give battle to ours on the lake, or make an attempt to open communication with Long Point, their depot of supplies. These men also gave information in regard to their squadron, armament, &c. Their flagship, "Detroit," Commodore Barclay, was armed with nineteen long guns; the "Queen Charlotte," Captain Finnis, seventeen carronades; "Lady Provost," Lieutenant Commander Buchan, thirteen long guns; brig "Hunter," Lieutenant Bignall, ten guns, (mixed armament;) "Little Belt," three guns; schooner "Chippewa," Master Campbell, one heavy gun; with 32 officers and 490 men, including troops serving as marines, and volunteers. According to this information the number of officers and men of the two squadrons were about equal, though the British had the advantage in two respects, viz: *their* soldiers serving as marines were *veterans*, and, of course, superior to the raw troops Perry received from

Harrison's army and obtained at Erie. Secondly, there were over one hundred on the sick list in our squadron; whereas theirs were just out of port, and all in health. In regard to commanders the advantage was *decidedly* with the British. Here was a young and inexperienced officer, who had never been in even a *single* engagement ship to ship, much less squadron against squadron; in fact, had never seen *any* war service, except in the Mediterranean during the Tripolitan disturbance, when a midshipman; and for a short time in command of a flotilla of gunboats at Newport, R. I. With a hastily got up squadron and armament—sickness prevailing among the officers and crews of his vessels, and himself but just arisen from a bed of sickness—he was about to grapple with a veteran who had served with distinction under the world-wide renowned Nelson in the battle of Trafalgar, as also in several other naval combats; and now in command of a squadron which, with the exception of one ship and two of the small vessels, had been cruising as war vessels for one year under Captain Finnis, an experienced officer, and now second under Barclay. However, the gallant young Perry somewhat made up for his want of experience by his redoubtable energy and courage, counseled by his intuitive wisdom. Such a word as *fail* was not to be found in his vocabulary.

On the evening of the 9th of September, as the squadron lay at anchor in Put-in-Bay, Perry summoned his commanders on board the "Lawrence" to receive their final instructions. He claimed the honor of fighting the enemy's flagship with the "Lawrence;" the "Niagara" was allotted the "Queen Charlotte," and so on. He also showed them his "fighting flag,"

which had been prepared before he left Erie, and on which was inscribed the last words of the gallant and lamented Lawrence, "Don't give up the Ship." When the folds of this flag were thrown to the breeze from the main masthead of the "Lawrence" it was the signal to close with the enemy. He also enjoined upon them the advice of Nelson to his commanders in going into battle, viz: "If you lay the enemy close alongside you can't be out of your place." These officers now returned to their respective vessels to reflect upon coming events, and the duties enjoined upon them by their gallant young chief.

General Harrison had stationed a few companies of troops at Put-in-Bay to guard the rendezvous, as also to render assistance to the squadron should the enemy attempt an attack with their vessels, and troops in boats, by boarding in the night whilst ours were at anchor in this rather small haven. The distance from Canada being but about forty miles, the project was considered practicable in this summer weather and a dark night, with a moderate, fair wind.

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## CHAPTER IX.

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THE evening of the 9th of September was one of those beautiful Autumnal evenings peculiar to the lake region. The moon was at its full; the gentle land breeze was rippling

the waters of the beautiful haven and rustling the leaves of the surrounding forest. Occasionally was heard the hum of voices at the camp-fires on the shore, accompanied by the "peep" of the frogs in "Squaw Harbor," a small inlet on the west side of Put-in-Bay; and heaven appeared to smile upon those here gathered for the deadly strife of the succeeding day. The officers were sauntering around the quarter-deck, enjoying social converse, or canvassing the probable result of the coming battle, which they knew must be close at hand. In this circle on board the "Lawrence" none were more jovial and gay than the gifted and gallant Brooks, the commander of marines on board the "Lawrence." Ever noted for his genial spirit and social qualities, as well as manly beauty, he was a favorite wherever he went; and yet, alas! so soon to be sacrificed upon the altar of his country. At the other end of the ship, "Jack" was also enjoying himself—seated upon a gun-carriage, hatch-combing or fore-castle, cracking jokes, spinning yarns, or discussing the prospects of prize-money. Shortly the scene was changed—the announcement, "eight bells," followed by the sharp note of the boatswain's call—"All hands stand by your hammocks," given in that deep sonorous voice peculiar to his office—followed by the shrill fife and rattling drum in the tattoo on shore. The "watch below" were soon quietly sleeping in their hammocks—dreaming, probably, of distant dear ones, and quiet homes; or, mayhap, the booming of cannon, and slaughter and carnage fretting their slumbers. Alas! too true; many now sleeping so quietly, ere the same hour of the succeeding night, their mangled bodies would be resting upon the bottom of Lake Erie, wrapped in the same hammocks

they were now enjoying in their peaceful slumbers. This is the calm before the storm—the human mind at rest ere it is aroused to the frenzy of strife. Yes, such was the scene at Put-in-Bay the night before the battle.

As the sun rose on the morning of the 10th, "sail, ho!" was shouted from the lookout at the masthead of the "Lawrence." "Where away?" responded Lieutenant Forest, the officer of the deck. "To the northward and westward, in the direction of Detroit River," replied the lookout. The news was immediately communicated to the Commodore, and soon all were astir on board. The vessels of the enemy now began to lift one by one above the horizon, until six were counted. Soon the signal "Underway to get" was flying from the main masthead of the "Lawrence," and in half an hour the whole squadron were beating out of the narrow passage, with the wind light from the southwest. Rattlesnake Island lying immediately in front, Perry was endeavoring to weather it, and thereby keep the weather gauge. Much time was taken up in this effort, and Perry, becoming impatient, had given the order to "bear up" and go to the leeward of the island, as he was "determined to fight the enemy that day." Suddenly the wind shifted to the southeast, which enabled them to clear the island to windward, which secured the wind of the enemy. About this time, ten o'clock A. M., the enemy seeing our squadron clearing the land, hove-to on the port tack with their heads to the westward, the squadrons being now about eight miles apart.

The American squadron had been formed with the "Niagara" in the van, as it was expected the "Queen Charlotte" would



lead the enemy. It was now discovered their line was formed differently. Perry then ordered the "Niagara" to heave-to until the "Lawrence" came up with her, when Perry held a conversation with Captain Brevoort, the acting marine officer of the "Niagara," who was well acquainted with the vessels of the enemy and their armament, all except the "Detroit," and gave the requisite information. The line of the enemy was formed as follows, viz: the schooner "Chippewa" in the lead; next, their flagship "Detroit;" then brig "Queen Charlotte;" then brig "Hunter;" then schooner "Lady Provost;" the sloop "Little Belt" coming last, as named, in close order on-a-wind, with their heads to the westward

Perry now changed his line—which was the work of only a few moments—and arranged it as follows, viz: The "Lawrence" to lead and meet the "Detroit," with the "Scorpion" and "Ariel" on her weather-bow—they being fast sailing schooners—to act as dispatch vessels to carry orders, if necessary, and to support any portion of the line, should it be required; the brig "Caledonia" next, to meet the "Hunter;" then the "Niagara," to meet the "Queen Charlotte;" the other vessels, viz: Schooners "Somers," "Porcupine," "Tigress" and "Trippe," in line as named, to engage as they came up, without naming their particular opponents. There being a three-knot breeze at this time, 10:30 A. M., and the line being formed they all bore away for the enemy in gallant style. Perry now brought forth his "battle flag," previously named, and having mustered the crew aft on board the "Lawrence," unfolded the flag, and mounting a gun-slide, addressed them: "My brave lads, the inscription on this flag is the last words of the gallant

Captain Lawrence, after whom this vessel is named, viz: '*Don't give up the Ship!*' shall I hoist it?" "Aye, yie, sir," was the unanimous response; when away it sped to the mast-head of the "Lawrence," and when the roll was broken and the folds given to the breeze three hearty cheers were given for the flag and three more for their gallant commander, the spirit of which was taken up by the different vessels as the flag was descried, and one continuous cheer along the line was the response to the motto, "*Don't give up the Ship!*" As the ordinary dinner hour would find them in the midst of deadly strife, Perry ordered the noon-day grog to be served, when the bread bags and kids were produced for lunch. Perry now visited every portion of the deck, examining every gun and fixture. For every one he had a pleasant word of encouragement; for the Constitutions, the New Porters, the hunting skirted Kentuckian, the gallant boys from the Keystone State, &c., each were kindly and encouragingly greeted.

For a time a death-like silence prevailed, and the approaching warriors appeared to be absorbed in thought. The lake was smooth, and the gentle breeze wafted the vessels along without apparent motion. This lasted for an hour and a half, as our squadron gallantly approached the enemy, steering for the head of their line, on a course forming an acute angle of fifteen degrees. All necessary arrangements had been made for the coming strife; the decks had been sprinkled with sand to give a foot-hold when blood began to flow, and the stillness of this hour was occupied mostly in arranging and interchanging of friendship offerings to be sent to friends in case of death, and such kindly offices for the survivors to execute.

## CHAPTER X.

AS OUR vessels gradually approached the enemy in the light breeze, it reminded one of two gladiators in the arena, the one standing at bay in his allotted position awaiting the approach of his antagonist, as the latter gradually moved up to the combat. The British vessels presented a fine appearance; their line was compact as they lay hove-to with their heads to the westward, their newly painted sides, white sails, and bright red ensigns, as they tended to the breeze in the glowing September sun. Their movements and condition showed that a seaman and master-spirit held them in hand.

At half-past eleven A. M. the wind had become very light, though our leading vessels were all up in their stations, viz: Within halfcable's-length of each other, but the gunboats were somewhat distant and scattered. The "Trippe," the last of the line, was nearly two miles astern, in consequence of being a poor sailor, particularly in a light wind, and yet her gallant commander, Lieutenant Holdup, was using sweeps and other means of getting his vessel up into her station.

At a quarter before twelve M. the mellow sound of a bugle was heard from the "Detroit"—the signal for cheers along their line, and which was followed by "Rule Britannia" from their band. Directly a shot from one of the "Detroit's" long guns was thrown at the "Lawrence," but fell short, the distance being about a mile and a half. Thus the long silence was broken. A few minutes later a second shot was sent from the "Detroit," which took effect upon the "Lawrence,"

when a fire was opened with all their long guns upon the "Lawrence;" their line being in compact order, they were all within range of that vessel and the two schooners. Perry now ordered Lieutenant Yarnall (the executive officer) to hail the "Scorpion" and order her to commence firing with her heavy gun. The order was instantly complied with by Mr. Champlin, and was soon followed with a shot from the "Ariel." Perry finding these shots took effect, the "Lawrence" opened with her chase gun forward, which was followed by a discharge from the "Caledonia." The long guns of the enemy began to tell heavily upon the "Lawrence," when Perry brought her by the wind, and tried a division of the carronades; it was at once discovered the shot fell short. At this moment Elliot ordered the "Caledonia" to bear-up and make room for the "Niagara" to pass to the assistance of the "Lawrence." Perry now bore up and ran down to within half-musket shot of the "Detroit," when he brought his vessel by the wind on the port tack, with her maintopsail aback, and commenced with her broadside battery in good earnest. The "Caledonia" having followed the "Lawrence," was closely engaged with the "Lady Provost"—the "Scorpion" and "Ariel" having followed the "Lawrence," and keeping their places on her weather-bow, were using their heavy guns to good advantage. The "Niagara," however, instead of following the "Lawrence" into close action, kept her wind with her maintopsail aback, using her two long 12's, being completely out of range with the carronades, her broadside battery; consequently the battle, for a time, was mainly by the "Lawrence," "Caledonia," "Scorpion," and "Ariel" fighting the whole British squadron, assisted only by the two

long 12's of the "Niagara," and the distant random shots from the headmost gunboats.

At this juncture the "Queen Charlotte" finding her 24-pound carronades (her broadside battery) would not reach the "Niagara," ordered the "Hunter" to make room for her to pass and close with the "Detriot," from which position she could use her short guns to advantage upon the "Lawrence." In this situation the "Lawrence" sustained the fire of these two heavy vessels, as also random shots from the others, for over two hours, and until every gun was dismounted, two-thirds of her crew either killed or wounded, and so badly cut up aloft as to be unmanageable. The gallant Perry finding he could do nothing more with the "Lawrence," ordered the only boat left him alongside, and leaving Lieutenant Yarnall to surrender her to the enemy, should it become necessary, took his "fighting flag" under his arm and pulled for the "Niagara," then passing the "Lawrence's" weather-beam on a wind, to gain the head of the enemy's line. In the meantime, the enemy seeing they had rendered the "Lawrence" "*hors du combat*," and in the act of striking her colors, filled away with their heads to the westward—cheering along their line, and feeling certain the day would be theirs—the while temporarily repairing damages, evidently designing to get their vessels upon the other tack, and gaining the weather gauge, or, if not that, to get room to wear and thereby bring their starboard sides (which were comparatively fresh) to bear upon our vessels.

Perry, on reaching the "Niagara," was met at the gangway by Elliot. It is claimed by some of the officers of the "Niagara" that he spoke somewhat despondently, and much out of humor at the gunboats not getting up in time.

Elliot spoke encouragingly, and, anticipating Perry's wish, offered to take the boat, pull astern, and bring the gunboats up into close action, which proposition was thankfully accepted by Perry, and Elliot immediately started upon his mission. A breeze at this time (quarter past two P. M.) springing up, both squadrons gradually drew ahead—the "Lawrence" dropping out of the line. By apparent consent of both parties there was a general cessation of firing, and, as it would appear, both preparing for the desperate and final struggle. Under the freshening breeze the "Niagara" had obtained a commanding position abreast the "Detroit," with the "Queen Charlotte" following immediately in the wake of that vessel. The gunboats, in the meantime, by using every exertion and with the freshening breeze, were getting up within range with their heavy guns, using round shot and grape upon the enemy's two heavy vessels, having been ordered to cease firing upon the smaller ones by Elliot, and he taking command of the "Somers," the headmost one, himself.

At forty-five minutes past two, the gunboats being well up, the "Caledonia" in good position on the "Niagara's" lee-quarter, and all ready for a final effort, Perry showed the signal for "*close action*" from the "Niagara," then under fore and main topsails, top gallantsails, foresail, jib, and fore and aft mainsail, bore up for the enemy's line. The enemy, in the meantime, having discovered the intention of Perry, viz: *to break through their line*, the "Detroit" bore up to prevent being raked, and the "Queen Charlotte" attempted to pass the "Detroit" to leeward and meet the "Niagara" broadside-on after she had passed through their line, the "Detroit" to follow,

and cross her stern. However, the "Niagara" came down so rapidly, and reserving her fire, until she got close aboard, jibed over the fore and aft mainsail, and bailed it up, and when she got abreast of the "Detroit," gave her and the "Queen Charlotte" the starboard broadside at half pistol shot, and poured the port broadside into the "Lady Provost" and "Chippewa." So rapid was the movements of the "Niagara" they were taken unawares; the "Queen Charlotte" did not take room enough to pay off, consequently got becalmed under the lee of the "Detroit," which vessel, in bearing up to prevent being raked, fell athwart the bows of the "Queen Charlotte" and fouled with her. In this predicament they received the broadside of the "Niagara," as also a heavy fire from the "Caledonia," which vessel had followed the "Niagara" down through the enemy's line. In the meantime the gunboats were seriously cutting them up with their long heavy guns at close range. After passing through the line the "Niagara" rounded-to on the starboard tack under their lee, with her main topsail aback, and kept pouring broadside after broadside into these two entangled vessels. So fierce was this closing contest, and the destruction so great on board these two vessels in particular, that in fifteen minutes from the time the "Niagara" bore up, an officer appeared on the taff-rail of the "Queen Charlotte" with a white handkerchief fastened to a boarding-pike, and waved it as a symbol of submission—they had struck—the "Detroit" followed, the hail was passed from vessel to vessel and the firing ceased. Two of their smaller vessels attempted to escape, but were promptly pursued and brought back by the "Scorpion" and "Trippe."

## CHAPTER XI.

AS SOON as the smoke cleared away the two squadrons were found to be intermingled. The "Niagara" lay close under the lee of the "Detroit," "Queen Charlotte," and "Hunter;" the "Caledonia," "Trippe," and "Scorpion" near the "Niagara," having followed that vessel through the enemy's line; the "Lady Provost" and "Chippewa" a little distance to the westward, with the "Somers," "Tigress," and "Porcupine" abreast of the "Hunter;" the shattered and glorious "Lawrence" was drifting with the wind some distance to the eastward. Like a wounded warrior, who had fallen in the thickest of the fight, she could only look at the victorious result she had suffered in achieving. At the shout of victory her flag was again hoisted by the remaining heroes upon her bloody deck, there forever to remain.

At this juncture the gallant Perry wrote his laconic notes to General Harrison, and Hon. Wm. Jones, the Secretary of the Navy, using the back of an old letter for his note to the General, and the blank leaf in that to the Secretary, with the top of his navy cap to write upon. They were as follows, viz:

"U. S. S. "NIAGARA," Sept. 10th—4 P. M.

"DEAR GEN'L:—We have met the enemy and they are ours; two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop.

"Yours, with great respect and esteem,

"O. H. PERRY."

A few moments later, and after reflecting upon his wonderful preservation amid such carnage and destruction, the good-



ness of that power who controls all things, he wrote to the Secretary, viz :

“ U. S. BRIG “ NIAGARA,” OFF THE WEST SISTER,        }  
“ HEAD OF LAKE ERIE, Sept. 10th, 1813—4 P. M. }

“ SIR :—It has pleased the Almighty to give to the arms of the United States a signal victory over their enemies on this lake. The British squadron, consisting of two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop, have this moment surrendered to the force under my command, after a sharp conflict.

“ I have the honor to be, sir,

“ Very respectfully your obedient servant,

“ O. H. PERRY.”

These hasty, yet admirably worded, dispatches were immediately sent, via schooner, to the mouth of Portage River, then the headquarters of Harrison, and distant some twelve miles.

Now was to be performed the proud but melancholy duty of taking possession of the captured vessels. On board the “ Detroit ” Commodore Barclay was found to be severely wounded, her First Lieutenant, Garland, mortally, as also Purser Hoffmeister, severely. On board the “ Queen Charlotte,” Captain Finnis, her commander, and Lieutenant Gordon, of the marines, were killed, with First Lieutenant Stokes and Midshipman Foster wounded. On board the “ Lady Provost,” Lieutenant Commandant Bignall and Master’s Mate Gateshill were wounded. On board the “ Chippewa,” Master’s Mate Campbell, commanding, was slightly wounded. The “ Little Belt ” had little or no casualties. The “ Detroit ” and “ Queen Charlotte ” were much shattered in their hulls, as also badly cut up aloft ; and the “ Lady Provost ” had her rudder shot away.

Otherwise their *smaller* vessels were not materially injured. The list of killed and wounded on board each vessel was never given to the public, only in sum total, viz: forty-one killed and ninety-four wounded, as per Commodore Barclay's report to Sir James Yeo.

Let us now leave the enemy's vessels and count the casualties in our own squadron. On board the "Lawrence" there were killed: John Brooks, lieutenant commanding marines; Henry Laub, midshipman; Christian Mayhen, quartermaster; John W. Allen, Joseph Kennedy, John Smith, Andrew Michael, Charles Pohig, Nelson Peters, James Jones, John Rose, Thomas Butler, and James Brown, seamen; James Cayst, sailmaker's mate; Wm. Mays, carpenter's mate; Philip Sharpley, corporal marines; Wm. Cranston and John Hoffman, ordinary seamen; Ethired Sykes, landsman; John C. Kelly, private in Kentucky volunteers; Jesse Harland and Abner Williams, privates of marines—22.

Wounded—John L. Yarnall, 1st lieutenant; Dulaney Forest, 2d lieutenant; W. V. Taylor, sailing master; Samuel Hamilton, purser; Thomas Claxton and Adjutant Swartwout, midshipmen; Jonas Stone, carpenter; Wm. C. Kean, master-at-arms; Francis Mason, John Newen, Joseph Lewis, and Ezekiel Fowler, quartermasters; John E. Brown and James Helan, quarter-gunners; Geo. Cornell, carpenter's mate; Wm. Johnson, boat-swain's mate; Thomas Hammond, armorer; Wm. Thompson, Geo. Varnum, James Moses, Wm. Roe, Joseph Deming, Wm. Daring, John Clay, Stephen Fairfield, Geo. Williams, Lannan Huse, James Waddington, John Burnham, John Burdeen, and Andrew Mattison, seamen; Jeremiah Easterbrook, Henry

Schroder, Benone Price, Thos. Robinson, Peter Kinsley, Nathan Chapman, Thos. Hill, Barney McClair, Wm. Dawson, Westerly Johnson, Samuel Spywood, Robert Hill, Francis Cummings, Thos. Reed, Charles Vandyke, Wm. Simpson, Jesse Williams, and James Hadley, ordinary seamen; James Bird, sergeant marines; Wm. Burnett, Wm. Baggs, David Christy, Henry Vandoo, marines; Thos. Triff, Elijah Partin, John Adams, Charles Harrington, and Wm. B. Perkins, landsmen; Nathaniel Wade and Newport Hazard, boys—61. (On the morning of the battle the sick list of the "Lawrence" numbered thirty-one unfit for duty.)

On board of the "Niagara" the killed were, Peter Morce, seaman; Isaac Hardy, ordinary seaman—2. Wounded, John J. Edwards, 1st lieutenant; Acting Master Webster; John C. Cummings, midshipman; John Filton, boatswain's mate; Edward Martin, George Piatt, Henry Davidson, James Lansford, Thos. Wilson, Charles Davidson, Daniel Bennett, seamen; Wm. Davis, Ronvell Hall, Elias Wiley, John M. Stribuck, ordinary seamen; ——— Mason, sergeant marines; ——— Scott, corporal marines; Joshua Trapnill, Thos. Miller, John Rumas, Geo. McManomy, George Scoffield, and Samuel Cochran, marines—23. (On the morning of the battle the sick list of the "Niagara" contained twenty-eight unfit for duty.)

On board the "Caledonia," none killed. Wounded, James Artis, Isaac Perkins, James Phillips—3.

On board the "Somers," none killed. Wounded, Charles Ordeen and Godfrey Bowman—2.

On board the "Ariel," killed, John White, boatswain's mate

—1. Wounded, Wm. Sloss, Robert Wilson, seamen ; John Lucas, landsman.

On board the “Trippe,” none killed. Wounded, Isaac Green, soldier, acting marine.

On board the “Scorpion,” killed, John Clark, midshipman ; John Sylhammer, landsman—2.

On board the “Porcupine” and “Tigress,” none killed or wounded.

About four P. M. a boat was seen approaching the “Lawrence” and Perry recognized in it. He was now returning to his shattered and helpless ship to meet the remnant of her gallant crew in this hour of victory, and that they should be witnesses of the formal surrender. Dr. Parsons says : “Those of us who were spared, and were able to walk, met him at the gangway to welcome him on board ; but the salutation was a silent one—not a word could find utterance.”

“The battle o’er, the victory won,” all offered up a silent prayer for the miraculous escape from injury of their gallant young chieftain ; and himself claiming, in a conversation with Purser Hamilton, that he “believed the prayers of his wife had saved him.”

During the day Perry had worn a round-jacket ; he now resumed his undress uniform to receive the officers of the captured vessels in tendering their swords, as a formal submission. In coming on board they picked their way among the carnage and wreck, and, on approaching Perry, presented their swords. Perry, in a bland and low tone, requested them to “retain their side arms.” Lieutenant O’Keefe, of the Forty-first Royal Regiment, was charged by Commodore Barclay with

the delivery of his sword. It was said he presented a fine appearance, being a large, finely formed man, and in full dress. Perry then inquired, with deep concern, in regard to the condition of Commodore Barclay and the other wounded officers, and tendered every assistance within his reach. In the course of the evening Perry visited Barclay on board the "Detroit," and tendered him every sympathy; also promised to assist in procuring an early parole, as Barclay was anxious to return to England as soon as possible on account of his health.

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## CHAPTER XII.

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IT BEING deemed inadvisable to try and save the killed for burial on shore—more particularly those on board the "Lawrence"—at nightfall they were all lashed up in their hammocks, with a 32-pound shot for a companion to anchor them on the bottom of the lake; the surviving officers and men gathered around as witnesses to the solemn scene; the burial service of the Episcopal Church read by the chaplain, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," when

Down, down, they sank, without a knell,  
Yet in their country's cause they fell.

Such was the burial of the foremast Jacks who fell on the 10th of September. Those on the larger vessels of the enemy were thrown overboard as fast as they were killed, though not

so with the smaller ; those remaining were buried with ours. As the mellow rays of the Autumnal sunset were radiating from the western horizon, the blue waters of Lake Erie closed over the remains of these gallant sons of Neptune and Mars, whom, but a few hours before, were hurling defiance and destruction at each other, but now hushed in death and everlasting peace, their spirits in the presence of their God. The remains of the officers were reserved for burial on shore.

The night of the 10th of September, 1813, was ever vividly remembered by the survivors of both squadrons as the vessels lay intermingled at anchor in the open lake. The booming of cannon, the crash of timbers, and slaughter of human beings had ceased ; but the dreadful havoc remained. The stern order of the officer, and prompt response of the subordinate, in looking after the safety of the vessels was blended with the groans of the wounded. The honor of the two nations had been vindicated by the slaughter of their devoted sons, the wounded of whom were *now* endeavoring to soothe and comfort each other in their affliction.

On the morning of the 11th Perry removed his flag to the schooner "Ariel," intending to make her the flagship for the present, the "Lawrence" being a complete wreck. At nine A. M. the signal was made to "weigh anchor," and the squadrons sailed for Put-in-Bay, where they arrived about noon and anchored, when every effort was made to keep some of the worst injured from sinking and secure the wounded masts. Preparations were now made for the burial of the fallen officers, which was to take place on the following morning.

The morning of the 12th (Sunday) was clear and calm—

emblematic of the day and the solemn duties they were about to perform—the calm after the storm. At ten A. M., the colors of both nations being at half-mast and all things ready, the bodies were lowered into boats, and then, with measured stroke and funeral dirge, moved in line to the shore, the while minute guns being fired alternately from the “Lawrence” and “Detroit.” On landing the procession was formed in reverse order, the corpse of the youngest and lowest in rank first, and so on, alternately American and British, the body of Captain Finnis coming last. As soon as the corpses were taken up by the bearers and moved on, the officers fell into line, two American and two British, and marched to the solemn music of the bands of both squadrons. On reaching the spot where the graves were prepared they were lowered into the earth in the order in which they had been borne, and the beautiful and solemn burial service of the Episcopal Church rendered by the chaplains of the respective squadrons: “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes—looking for the general resurrection in the last day.” The volley of musketry followed, and all was over; the heroes were at rest.

O, cruel Mars, thou wicked God!—many a husbandless, fatherless, brotherless, and sonless family hath thy votaries made in their devotion to thy cause—their adhesion to thy bloody motto, “*Seek the bubble reputation at the cannon’s mouth.*” What a time for serious reflection? Why is it that christian nations will still insist upon settling their difficulties by a resort to arms, as the only healing balm for wounded honor—too often only imaginary? Here were men, scions of the same stock, speaking the same language, worshipping at the same

altar—men whom would be like brothers under different circumstances—meeting each other in deadly strife; in the most savage manner hastening to destroy each other, and all without animosity, save in the frenzy of battle; and when the carnage is complete—the strife ended—taking each other by the hand, and in a spirit of kindness and sympathy rendering every aid in their power to heal, soothe, and comfort the unfortunate victims of their deadly work. But still more is to be said in regard to *this* strife. What but a disagreement between a passionate and austere mother and her perverse daughter, the latter having left the old homestead and taken a house to herself—both forgetting the ties of consanguinity which should have bound them in love and harmony evermore.

On the 13th the “Ohio” returned to Sandusky and found the squadron absent. Mr. Dobbins felt certain a battle had taken place, and, of course, was anxious to know the result, as also how to shape his future course. Soon a couple of boats were discovered in-shore and he gave chase. He succeeded in cutting one off, which proved to be an American, and from the men on board learned that there had been a battle, but no details other than that the Americans were supposed to be victorious, as all the vessels were taken into Put-in-Bay. Mr. Dobbins immediately bore up for that place, where he found the squadron at anchor with their prizes. The arrival of the “Ohio” with fresh supplies was a Godsend to the sick and wounded. Soon followed the arrival of a boat from Cleveland and another from Sandusky, with vegetables and fresh meat, adding much to the comfort of the afflicted, as also to the able-bodied. The wounded were still on board their respective



vessels ; and Commodore Barclay was made as comfortable on board the "Detroit" as circumstances would permit. It being necessary to dispose of the prisoners, all the rank and file, so to speak, including some of the officers able to travel, were immediately dispatched to Chillicothe, Ohio, under the auspices of General Harrison. In the meantime the "Lawrence" was being so far repaired as to be able to convey the badly wounded of both squadrons to Erie, and where she safely arrived on the 23d, under the command of Lieutenant John L. Yarnall, himself wounded. With what joy the people espied the gallant craft as she rounded the peninsula in her approach to the harbor! She that had gone out staunch and bold was now returning a cripple, but *victorious*—freighted with the wounded of both squadrons. Like the wounded warrior returning to his peaceful home, she was welcomed with tears and smiles. As soon as she was anchored the unfortunates were conveyed on shore in boats, and every attention given by the citizens to make them as comfortable as possible—friend and foe alike. The "Lawrence" was immediately got over the bar and moored in Misery Bay, where she was sufficiently repaired to keep her from sinking for the time.

What food for reflection ! But one short month had passed since the gallant young commander had sailed with his hastily gotten up squadron—had met and conquered the enemy ; and his now maimed and battered flagship was returning for the first time freighted with the unfortunate victims of the deadly strife. What a contrast ! But a few days since these brave fellows were hurling the bolts of destruction at each other—now they were quietly resting side by side on board the "Lawrence," exchanging kindness and sympathy with each other,

We will now give some comments upon the battle, and, in doing so, will be as brief as possible—relying upon impartial testimony, fully corroborated by circumstances.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

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SHORTLY after the battle, unfortunately, a spirit of crimination and recrimination sprang up among the officers in regard to the conduct of Elliot, with his ship “Niagara,” *during* the battle, and finally culminated in a bitter feud. It was found several years afterwards that it would result in a duel between Perry and Elliot had not the former been ordered to sea in command of a special expedition to Venezuela, constituted of the sloop of war “John Adams” and schooner “Nonesuch,” and died ere his return to the United States.

In the first instance, the line, with the “Niagara” in the van, was changed for manifest reasons and without the slightest difficulty or delay. Much stress has been placed upon this evolution by some of the friends of Elliot, without much reason, as we believe, the vessels being a long distance from the enemy at the time.

When the “Lawrence” was first brought by the wind to try the range of her carronades upon the enemy, the shot of which was found to fall short, the “Niagara” was in her allotted posi-

tion ; and when the order was given, " Engage as you come up, each vessel against her opponent," and the " Lawrence " again bore up to shorten the distance, the " Niagara " *did not* follow, though Elliot had ordered the " Caledonia " *out of her place* to make room for the " Niagara " to close up with the " Lawrence " within the prescribed distance, viz : " half cable's-length," but kept her wind—using only her two long 12-pounders, having shifted the port gun over to the starboard side, occasionally using a division of her carronades, but without effect, as the shot fell short. I would ask, was this not breaking the line? The " Lawrence " was the commanding and leading ship, and it was the duty of the " Niagara " to follow her and engage the " Queen Charlotte," her opponent. The excuse that there was " little or no wind," is inadmissible ; if there was wind enough for the " Lawrence " to close, there certainly was enough for the " Niagara " to follow. The " Caledonia," on the other hand, when ordered to " bear up for the " Niagara " to pass," kept on down in company with the " Lawrence " and engaged at close quarters. The " Scorpion " and " Ariel " also bore up with the " Lawrence " and kept their stations on the weather-bow of that vessel. The " Niagara " had kept this long-shot distance for some two hours, while the " Lawrence " was closely engaged with the three heaviest vessels of the enemy during the same time. As before stated, the line of the enemy was formed with the schooner " Chippewa " in the van, then " Detroit," " Hunter," " Queen Charlotte," " Lady Provost," and " Little Belt," in line as named. The " Lawrence " to meet the " Detroit," " Caledonia " to meet the " Hunter," " Niagara " to meet the " Queen

Charlotte," the "Somers" and other gunboats to engage the "Lady Provost" and "Little Belt."

To show that *even the enemy* understood these allotments, as arranged by Perry, I will give an extract from Commodore Barclay's letter to Sir George Provost, viz :

"At a quarter before twelve I commenced the action by a few long guns ; at a quarter past the American Commodore, also supported by two schooners, one carrying four long 12-pounders, the other a long 32 (24), came close to action with the "Detroit." The other brig of the enemy—apparently destined to engage the "Queen Charlotte"—supported in like manner by two schooners, kept so far to windward as to render the "Queen Charlotte's" 20 (24) pounder carronades useless."

The "Queen Charlotte" retained her position abreast of the "Niagara" for some time, and Captain Finnis finding that vessel was not disposed to place herself within reach of his 24-pound carronades, and she being to windward and he not able to close with her, ordered the "Hunter" to bear up and make room for the "Queen Charlotte" to move up to the "Detroit" and open upon the "Lawrence," which vessel *was* within range. It is well known that the range of 24-pound carronades and that of 32's is very near the same, the only difference being *the weight of metal thrown*. Thus, if the carronades of the "Queen Charlotte" would not reach the "Niagara," those of that vessel would not reach the "Queen Charlotte," though it is claimed Elliot tried an occasional division to get the range. It is claimed by some officers of experience that Elliot might have excused himself, to some extent, by claiming that Perry was impetuous in rushing into close action with only a portion of his force

available. In fact, it was stated by skillful officers that "no commander ever went into battle in *worse* shape and came out of it *better*"—that "Perry should have kept off at a distance until all his vessels were up, and then in a compact line have borne up and engaged at close quarters"—that "he should have taken pattern by his adversary, who, having seen service in squadron engagements, had his line in compact order." However, Perry, like all young warriors of the right mettle, became impatient when the shot of the enemy began to tell upon his vessel. This, however, does not exculpate Elliot for remaining at a distance and allowing the "Lawrence" to be cut to pieces by an overwhelming force without bearing down to her assistance.

The gunboats lagging astern may be deemed by some as *dilatory*. It is well known to all nautical men that fore-and-afters have not the advantage of square-rigged vessels in light winds, as the latter have their heavy sails aloft, besides have more light canvas. The "Scorpion" and "Ariel" were fast sailors, is the reason they were enabled to keep up with the larger vessels. For instance, the "Trippe," the last vessel in the line, although quite a good sailor in a strong breeze, could not keep her place, much to the chagrin of her gallant young commander, Lieutenant Holdup; but as soon as the breeze sprung up passed several of the others, and was the first of the lagging gunboats to close with the enemy.

The next matter we will take up is, how the "Niagara" obtained the position she occupied when Perry boarded her, viz: on the weather-bow of the "Lawrence," distant from fifty yards to half a mile, according to the conflicting testimony given

before the Court of Inquiry at New York in April, 1815. The cause assigned by Elliot for passing *to windward* of the "Lawrence" is, that he "was endeavoring to reach the head of the enemy's line and their large vessels, a breeze springing up at the time and the enemy filling away to shoot ahead." We will now have to resort to "cause and effect" in this argument. We will ask the question, why did she not go to *leeward* of the "Lawrence" and endeavor to draw the fire of the enemy from that over-powered vessel, as also to be within canister range with her carronades? The answer is given above, viz: that "it was necessary to go to windward in order to reach the head of the enemy's line," &c. The wind at this time was from southeast, but still quite light, the vessels all heading to the southward and westward. The enemy's vessels being much cut up aloft, would naturally not be very close to the wind; and the "Lawrence" being disabled, with her sails and rigging all in shreds, would be in poor trim for sailing by the wind, and was rather drifting with it; thus, the angle between her and the head of the enemy's line would be *sharpening* instead of *widening*, which latter would have to be the case to excuse the "Niagara" for going to windward. But, furthermore, the "Caledonia" passed the "Lawrence" to *leeward*, or between that vessel and the enemy, in order to keep within range, though her armament was of long guns. Whereas the "Niagara" passed *to windward*, and, of course, at a greater distance with her *carronade* battery. Thus good reasoning would determine that the policy, if not the *duty*, of Elliot was to have gone to *leeward* instead of to windward of the "Lawrence."

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE statement in regard to the sail the "Niagara" was under at the time Perry boarded her is so conflicting, we will give the statement of Benjamin Fleming, one of her main-topmen, who deceased but a few years since, and who gave this statement to the writer, viz :

"When Commodore Perry came on board (I give his own language, as near as possible) we were under topsails, fore and aft mainsail, and jib; the top-gallant-sails and mainsail furled, and foresail hauled up. The main topsail, I think, was not aback at this time, but it had been most of the time during the action. He came on board by the weather (port) gangway, and was met by Captain Elliot; they shook hands and had some conversation, which I could not hear from the top. Directly Captain Elliot went over the side into the same boat Commodore Perry came in, shoved off, and pulled for the small vessels astern. Some little time after, and when the gunboats had got pretty well up, and a breeze springing up, Commodore Perry set the signal for "close action," and immediately gave the order to "make sail"—"loose top-gallant-sails, board fore-tack, haul in the weather braces, put the helm up, and keep the brig off." I helped to loose the main top-gallant-sail myself. We bore up, gradually at first, with the wind on our quarter. Just before we got abreast of the "Detroit," to the best of my memory, we were before the wind, when we jibed the fore and aft mainsail and brailed it up at the same time, settled the top-gallant-sails upon the caps, hauled the foresail up, and at the same time fired a broadside into the "Detroit" and "Queen Charlotte" as they lay foul of each other, and our larboard guns into the "Lady Provost" and another schooner; then coming by the wind on the starboard tack, with the main-topsail to the mast, under the lee of the

“Detroit” and “Queen Charlotte,” kept up a heavy fire until they struck, which could not have been more than fifteen or twenty minutes after we passed through their line; the “Caledonia” and one or two of the gunboats followed us.”

It has been conceded that the British vessels were gallantly fought though laboring under several great disadvantages; the two most important of which were the loss of the services of both the first and second commanding officers, Commodore Barclay being severely, and Captain Finnis mortally wounded; as also the executive officers of both ships, Lieutenant Garland, of the “Detroit” mortally, and Lieutenant Stokes, of the “Queen Charlotte,” severely wounded—both regulars—leaving the command of the “Detroit” to Second Lieutenant Ingles, and the “Queen Charlotte” to Second Lieutenant Irvine, a provincial. Then the American squadron had the weather gauge. Their last evident manœuvre was well conceived, and could they have carried it out the battle would, at least, have been prolonged. But the *bold, sudden and daring dash* of Perry with the “Niagara,” completely frustrated and confused them. The manœuvre was as follows, viz:

When they noticed the movements of the “Niagara”—that Perry was determined to break through their line, the “Queen Charlotte” was to bear up, pass to leeward of the “Detroit,” and meet the “Niagara” broadside on as she passed, the “Detroit” to follow. Then as the “Niagara” and “Queen Charlotte” passed down before the wind, exchanging fires at pistol-shot-range, the “Detroit” to haul up, shoot athwart the stern of the “Niagara” and give her a raking fire from her starboard guns; and taking position upon her quarter, keep up this rak-



ing fire upon the "Niagara" while that vessel was engaged with the "Queen Charlotte"—a vessel of equal force—the three going off before the wind and separating from the other vessels. As before said, this manœuvre was frustrated by Perry's sudden and daring dash. The "Queen Charlotte" did not bear up in time to keep from being becalmed by the sails of the "Detroit," as that vessel by bearing up in haste to prevent being raked by the "Niagara," fell athwart the bow of the "Queen Charlotte," and fouled with her. As showing their intention, I will give a short extract from the letter of Lieut. Inglis of the "Detroit," which accompanied Com. Barclay's report to Sir George Provost.

"H. M. Late Ship "Detroit," Sept. 10th, 1813.

\* \* "SIR.—After you were wounded, the enemy's second brig, at that time on our weather beam, shortly took a position on our weather bow to rake us: to prevent which, in attempting to wear to get our *starboard* broadside to bear upon her, a number of our guns on the larboard side being at this time disabled, we fell on board the "Queen Charlotte," at that time running up to leeward of us. In this situation the two ships remained for some time. \* \* \*

"I have the honor to be, &c.,

"GEORGE INGLIS."

We will give still further extracts from the report of Commodore Barclay, giving the situation of matters at this critical time from *his* standpoint, viz :

\* \* \* "The action continued with great fury until half past two P. M., when I perceived my opponent drop astern, and a boat passing from him to the "Niagara," (*which vessel was at this time perfectly fresh.*) The American commodore seeing that, as yet, the day was against him, (his vessel

having struck soon after he left her) and also the very defenceless state of the "Detroit," which ship was now a perfect wreck, principally from the raking fire of the gun boats \* \* Made a noble, and alas! too successful, an effort to regain it, for he bore up, and, supported by his smaller vessels, passed within pistol shot, and took a raking position on our bow." \* \*

While giving these extracts we will also refer to the report of the "Naval Court Martial, convened on board His Majesty's ship "Gladiator," at Portsmouth, to inquire into the conduct of Commodore Barclay and his remaining officers in regard to the surrender of the British squadron on Lake Erie, September 10th, 1813." Some of the statements made in it are not borne out by facts, viz :

"The American force was double the amount of his (Barclay's) in number of ships and guns, and there was no comparison in respect to the quality of the seamen."

We will give the *figures* and let them speak the facts:

AMERICAN SQUADRON.			BRITISH SQUADRON.		
"Lawrence,"	260	tons, 20 guns	"Detroit,"	300	tons, 19 guns
"Niagara,"	260	" 20 "	"Queen Charlotte,"	260	" 17 "
"Caledonia,"	85	" 4 "	"Lady Provost,"	96	" 13 "
"Ariel,"	60	" 3 "	Brig "Hunter,"	75	" 10 "
"Scorpion,"	60	" 2 "	"Little Belt,"	60	" 3 "
"Somers,"	65	" 2 "	"Chippewa,"	35	" 1 "
"Trippe,"	50	" 1 "			
"Porcupine,"	50	" 1 "	Tonnage	826	" 63 "
"Tigress,"	50	" 1 "			6 vessels.
Tonnage	840	" 54 "	Which shows 9 guns in favor of the		
		9 vessels.	British squadron, and 14 tons in favor of		
			the American squadron.		

It is well known to be better to have a battery concentrated on board of one *heavy* vessel than in several small ones; and the British had *three* formidable vessels, as the "Lady Provost" was classed as a regular man-of-war schooner, mounting thir-

teen guns, most of which were of heavy caliber. She would have been a match for any *three* of the American vessels, excepting the "Lawrence" and "Niagara."

As for crews, the force of each squadron was about equal, viz: 500, all told; though the British had the advantage, as 116 in the American squadron were on the sick list on the day of the battle, seamen suffering the worst, as the change from salt to fresh water had a bad effect upon them, and many were down with the bilious fever, &c. Whereas, the British had but that day left port, and of course, all in good health. In respect to the number of seamen, say 150, there was but little difference; and in regard to the balance of the crews, the American, like the British, were mostly made up of soldiers and landsmen.

There was, however, one other *great* advantage they had, viz: The "Queen Charlotte," "Lady Provost," and brig "Hunter" were *regularly built war vessels*, and had been cruising for several years—but more particularly since the declaration of war. During the spring and summer of 1813, and while Perry was getting up the American squadron, they were constantly cruising off Erie. Thus, you see, they must have been in complete condition, and the crews in a good state of discipline.

In regard to Elliot leaving the "Niagara" to bring up the smaller vessels, then some distance astern into close action, some of Elliot's enemies claim that he was *ordered* to do so by Perry. This is evidently error. It would be a matter of great delicacy—to say the least of it—to order an officer of nearly his own rank *from his ship* under such circumstances to perform such duty. The evidence of Perry, in his note to Elliot, of the

18th of September, at Put-in-Bay gives undoubtedly the truth, viz: "Your anticipating my wishes to bring up the small vessels into close action, thereby contributing largely to our victory," &c., as also using the same language in substance in his report to the Secretary of the Navy. Again, it was but characteristic of Perry to use the language imputed to him by Captain Brevoort, viz: After the action and Captain Elliot returned on board (the "Niagara") Captain Perry caught him by the hand, saying, "I owe much of this to you," &c. This was the outpouring of a generous and chivalrous nature. Perry had gained a grand victory, and he felt like embracing every one who had contributed to the brilliant achievement. Most certainly the volunteering to bring up the distant smaller vessels into close action, and the prompt manner it was executed, and their efficient services afterwards, (Barclay claiming "the raking fire of the gun boats to be terrific on board the 'Detroit,'") Elliot having ordered them to cease firing on the smaller vessels and direct it at the "Detroit" and "Queen Charlotte." Then, if from any implied improper motives he had not closed with his antagonist, the "Queen Charlotte," this gallant act should aid in covering up the sin to some extent.

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## CHAPTER XV.

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“**T**O ERR is human, to forgive is divine,” and that “none of us are infallible,” should ever be uppermost in our minds. Perry, with all his nobleness of character, gallantry

and truthfulness of purpose, erred in accusing Elliot of *cowardice* after mentioning him in the most complimentary terms in his report to the Secretary of the Navy and subsequent letters, as also in conversations. It should also be borne in mind that the previous and subsequent conduct of Elliot, on Lake Ontario, and capturing the two vessels from under the guns of Fort Erie, as also on Lake Erie, evinced anything but cowardice. The writer, had a conversation with a naval officer of high rank, (now deceased) a few years since, who said: "It is a mistake to accuse Elliot of being a coward. I made a cruise with him some years since, and think I know him like a book; cowardice is the last sin that could be laid at the door of "Old Jesse." He was somewhat egotistical and austere, yet a good officer and thorough seaman. He was no coward, I assure you."

Then as to the accusation of *treachery*, made by some of the accusers of Elliot, we will only give the *facts* and *circumstances*, and leave the reader to come to his own conclusions. In the first place, Elliot *did not close* with his allotted antagonist the "Queen Charlotte," as per order of Perry, and which was expected by not only every intelligent officer in the American squadron, but also the British, but kept out of carronade-range until Perry boarded her—leaving the "Lawrence" to fight the enemy's heavy vessels almost single-handed. In the second place, he should have passed to leeward of the "Lawrence," or, between her and the enemy, when endeavoring to reach the head of the enemy's line, and thereby have drawn the heavy fire of the enemy from that crippled vessel. Then, on seeing that the "Lawrence" was silenced, and no signal thrown out from her, presumed the "commanding officer was killed,"

intended to assume command. These accusations are *vital* in their importance, and should be well considered.

Immediately after the battle the conduct of Elliot with the "Niagara" become the general topic of conversation, and Elliot criticised. Perry, with all the kindness of his forgiving nature, was anxious to stop this censuring of Elliot, and cautioned the officers to silence on this subject. The strongest defense Elliot had was the language of Perry himself. In a letter to Elliot at Put-in-Bay, under date of September 19th, in answer to one from Elliot of the previous day, Perry said :

\* \* \* "I am indignant that any report should be in circulation prejudicial to your character, as respects the action of the 10th inst. It affords me pleasure that I have it in my power to assure you that the conduct of yourself, officers and crew, was such as to meet my warmest approbation. I consider the circumstances of your volunteering to bring up the smaller vessels into close action as contributing largely to our victory. I shall ever believe it a premeditated plan of the enemy to disable our commanding vessel by bringing all their force to bear upon her ; and I am satisfied had they not pursued this course the engagement would not have lasted thirty minutes. I have no doubt if the "Charlotte" had not made sail to engage the "Lawrence" the "Niagara" would have taken her in twenty minutes.

"Very respectfully, &c.,

"O. H. PERRY.

"Capt. J. D. Elliot, U. S. S. 'Niagara.'"

It was afterwards claimed by Perry that these letters were given *at the time* to soothe the wounded feelings of Elliot, but not to be used for publication, which use *was* made of them. And furthermore, the complimentary matter in the letters was afterwards *withdrawn*, and the conduct of Elliot threatened to

be the subject of a court-martial, the charges preferred by Perry. We will also give some extracts from the lengthy letter of the officers of the "Niagara" to the Secretary of the Navy—giving a detailed account of the battle from their standpoint :

"U. S. S. "NIAGARA," 13th October, 1813. }  
 "AT ANCHOR OFF DETROIT. }

"RESPECTED SIR:—We have with regret seen the condensed, and, suffer us to add, the partial statements of the late *action* on Lake Erie ; and, induced by motives of the warmest admiration and great respect for our commander, Captain J. D. Elliot, we take the liberty of laying before you our combined observations on the above late action, and knowing, as we do, your power of discrimination and impartiality of judgment, we commit it to you with full confidence of its universal confidence and consideration. (Here is given a detailed account of the action, which, as said before, is given from *their* standpoint, but of too great a length for insertion.) \* \* \* We are unwilling to quit the subject without expressing our estimation of our noble commander. We feel it our duty to him and to ourselves to express our opinion of his conduct during the action, which was manifested by his cool, brave and judicious deportment, and are firmly of the opinion that his valor could not be surpassed by any ; and that in him the American flag has a most zealous, skillful, and heroic defender. We have here endeavored, sir, to give you a succinct and minute account of the action from the commencement to the close ; in doing this we have been actuated by unprejudiced love and respect for Captain Elliot.

"We have the honor to be, sir,

"Your obedient servants, &c.,

"J. E. SMITH, Lieutenant,

"H. MAGRATH, Purser,

"J. J. EDWARDS, Lieutenant,

"NELSON WEBSTER, A. M.,

"A. B. BREVOORT, Capt. 2d Reg't U. S. Infantry.

"Hon. Wm. Jones, Sec'y of the Navy, Washington City, D. C."

These officers were honorable, high-minded, and patriotic men ; therefore, their statements should not, by any means, be ignored ; and if treachery or cowardice was manifested by their commander, if for nothing else, for their *own* reputations, it is to be presumed, they would not have sanctioned or endeavored to *cover up* such manifestations of conduct. Some little excuse for these statements may be given thus wise, viz : To treat this *grave* question with a *lighter* hand and to some extent illustrate in accord with human nature, we will state that it is proverbial with the officer, as well as Jack, to regard the reputation of his ship, when assailed, with the same feeling, and defend her with the same spirit, he would his wife. But we will take leave of this unfortunate controversy and revert to more pleasant and interesting incidents of the action. Had all been like the noble and generous Perry this bad feeling would have been strangled in its infancy, and never have gone out to the public.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

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TO SHOW how raged the battle on board the "Lawrence," we will give some statements of Dr. Parsons, her surgeon :

"The wounded began to come down before the "Lawrence" opened her battery, and, for one, I felt impatient at the delay.



In proper time, however, the war-dogs were let loose from their lash, and it seemed as though heaven and earth were at logger-heads. For more than two long hours little could be heard but the deafening thunders of our own broadsides, the crash of balls dashing through our timbers, and the shrieks of the wounded. These were brought down faster than I could attend to them, other than to stay the bleeding, or support the shattered limbs with splints, and pass them forward upon the berth-deck. Two or three were killed near me after being wounded. Among those early brought down was Lieut. Brooks, son of the late Gov. Brooks of Massachusetts, a most accomplished gentleman and officer, and renowned for personal beauty. A cannon-ball hit him in the hip; he knew his doom, and inquired how long he could live; I told him a few hours. He inquired two or three times how the day was going, and expressed a hope that the Commodore would be saved. But new comers from deck brought dismal reports, until finally it was announced that we had struck. In the lamentations of despair among the wounded I lost sight of poor Brooks for a few minutes; but when the electrifying cry was heard that the enemy's two ships had struck, I rushed on deck to see if it was true, and then to poor Brooks to cheer him, but he was no more."

"When the battle had raged an hour and a half, I heard a call for me at the small sky-light, and stepping forward, saw it was the Commodore, whose countenance was as calm and placid as if on ordinary duty. 'Doctor,' said he, 'send me one of your men,'—meaning one of the six that were to assist me,—which was done instantly. In five minutes the call was repeated and obeyed, and at the seventh call, I told him he had them all. He then asked if any one could pull a rope, when two or three crawled upon deck and assisted at the last guns. When the battle was raging most severely, Midshipman Laub came down with his arm badly fractured; I applied a splint, and requested him to go forward and lie down; as he was leaving me, and while my hand was upon him, a cannon-ball struck him in the side, dashing him against the other side of the room, which instantly terminated his sufferings. Charles

Pohig, a Narragansett Indian, who was badly wounded, suffered in like manner.

“There were some incidents, less painful to witness. Lieut. Yarnell had his scalp badly torn, and came below with the blood streaming over his face; some lint was hastily applied and confined with a bandanna, with instructions to report for further dressing after battle. He at once returned upon deck. The hammocks stowed on deck had been knocked to pieces with the cannon-balls, and let loose the contents of some mattresses filled with flag-heads or cattails, which floated in the air like feathers. These gathered upon Yarnell’s blood-covered head, and made it resemble that of a huge owl.

“When the smoke cleared away after the battle was over, the two fleets were found completely mingled. Our own shattered ship, lying to the windward of them, was once more allowed to hoist her colors, which was cheered by the few feeble voices on board—making a melancholy sound to the boisterous cheers that preceeded the battle, when Perry’s fighting flag, ‘Don’t give up the Ship,’ was first mastheaded.”

It has been erroneously recorded by some authors that Perry took his little brother (Alexander) with him when he left the “Lawrence” for the “Niagara.” This is error, I will give the language of Dr. Parsons in regard to it, and none knew better:

“After his return to his shattered ship, Perry walked aft, when his first remark was made to his intimate friend, Purser Hamilton, then lying wounded on deck, ‘The prayers of my wife have saved me.’ Then casting his eyes about, he inquired, ‘Where is my brother?’ This brother was a young midshipman of thirteen years. He had, during the battle, acted as a sort of aid to Perry in running with orders to different parts of the ship, for you must know that in the din and uproar of battle orders can be heard but a little distance. We made a general stir to look the boy up, not without fears that he had been knocked overboard, but he was soon found in his berth asleep, exhausted with the fatigues and excitement of the day,

as also having received a severe thump from a hammock a cannon-ball had thrown against him."

The hand of an all-wise providence had been held over the heads of the two brothers, and they were saved.

The day after the battle, as some of our officers were conversing with the British on board the "Detroit," one of the latter asked his comrade, "What has become of the Indians?" Search was made and they discovered snugly stowed away in the cable tier. They were brought upon deck, much alarmed. However were soon assured they would not be hurt, and then became quite communicative. When asked how they liked the sport, said, "No more come with one-armed captain (Barclay) in big canoe—shoot big gun too much. Gemokomon\* (American) much big fight." This sort of warfare was not to their tastes. They had evidently been taken on board as "sharp-shooters," to pick off the officers. They were stationed in the maintop of the "Detroit," and when the bullets began to fly aloft thought they were all aimed at them, and hastily retreated to the deck, where they found it no better, and then to the hold. They were sent to Malden with some paroled officers who had families there.

The trip of Perry from the "Lawrence" to the "Niagara" in a boat, it appears to us, is not properly understood or appreciated; or rather, that the *act* is eulogized instead of the *motive*. "If a victory is to be gained I'll gain it," said Perry as he left the shattered "Lawrence." Such was his intention,

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\* Gemokomon," signifying "Long-Knife" or sword, an implement of warfare unknown to them previous to their early wars with the whites. It is the name given to the "Yankees."

and *therein laid the merit*. The passing from vessel to vessel had been frequently done where squadrons were engaged, and had been done that same day; and furthermore, Elliot took the *same boat*, and twice traversed the length of our line, then stopped on board the "Somers" and took command of her in person. As for personal danger, it was everywhere on that occasion, and less, if anything, in a boat than on the deck of a vessel, particularly the "Lawrence."

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## CHAPTER XVII.

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THE victory of the 10th gave us the command of the lake, and now Harrison was about to push matters for a victory on land. He had called upon the venerable Gov. Shelby of Kentucky, for volunteers, and invited the "veteran of King's Mountain" to command them in person, to which he responded in the affirmative, though in his sixty-sixth year. The patriotic state of Kentucky was in a blaze of enthusiasm when the Governor issued his proclamation for volunteers, and twice the number required showed themselves ready for the "war-path." Soon he was on his winding way for the banks of Lake Erie, at the head of 3,500 mounted men, with such men as Henry, Desha, Allen, Caldwell, King, Childs, Trotter, R. M. and J. Johnson, Adin, Crittenden, McDowell, Walker and Barry, as subordinates. At Fort Ball (now Tiffin) they got news of Perry's victory, which hurried them on to Camp Portage, and where they arrived on the 15th. Harrison had some

friendly Indians, of the Wyandot, Shawneese, Seneca and Delaware tribes, under their chiefs, as before named.

The prisoners being disposed of, the wounded and sick cared for, every exertion was now made to put the available vessels of both squadrons in proper condition, and make the necessary arrangements for transporting Harrison's army, then encamped at Portage River and Fort Meigs, to the Canada shore. The vessels were "Niagara," "Caledonia," "Somers," "Ohio," "Trippe," "Scorpion," "Ariel," "Tigress," and "Porcupine," of the American, and "Hunter," "Lady Provost," "Little Belt," and "Chippewa," of the late British squadron. Perry made the "Ariel" the flagship, and sailed with her on the morning of the 19th for Camp Portage, in advance of the squadron, to counsel with General Harrison. It having been arranged to transport the army to Put-in-Bay first, the embarkation commenced on the 20th and by the 24th the army of 4,500 men were all landed at Put-in-Bay, the horses to be left at Camp Portage, except the regiment of Col. R. M. Johnson, which was to go round the head of the Lake to Detroit and join the army there, provided the place could be re-captured. Harrison and staff took passage in the "Ariel."

On the passage of the "Ariel" to Put-in-Bay, a little incident occurred which goes to confirm the saying, viz: "A kind and brave heart are apt to occupy the same breast." On board were a company of young Virginians, one of their number, who was but just recovering from a fever, approached Maj. Chambers, with whom he was acquainted, and who was then conversing with Lieut. Packet, commander of the "Ariel," and asked him in a mild and courteous manner "if it could be

possible to obtain a cup of coffee from the cabin ; that the cold, coarse food they were confined to in accordance with army regulations, he could not eat." The Major, being but slightly acquainted with Perry, asked Lieut. Packet, who hesitated, as there was such a crowd of officers on board, and the matter was apparently dropped. Perry happened to be seated near by and overheard the conversation, and without saying a word to either party, quietly ordered the steward to prepare supper for the whole squad, and in a short time they were all seated as best they could in the small cabin, enjoying a *warm meal*, with Perry by their side attending to their wants.

The next move concluded upon was to transport the army to an island called "Middle Sister," about twenty-five miles from the Canada shore, and where they were all safely landed by the 26th. Arrangements for transportation and debarkation being complete, on the morning of the 27th, the weather being favorable, the army was again embarked on the vessels and in boats, the vessels taking the boats in tow, and by two P. M. arrived at the point of destination, when the vessels were moored, with springs upon their cables, one-fourth of a mile from the shore, to cover the landing of the troops. The troops were successfully landed ; not finding any of the enemy in the neighborhood took up their line of march for Malden. They soon heard General Proctor had evacuated that post, and was in rapid retreat up the Canadian side of the Detroit River, leaving only a rear guard to destroy the barracks, navy yard, and stores. The squadron immediately moved round into the river, and followed the army as they advanced. On the 29th they reached Sandwich, when some vessels were dispatched

with McArthur's brigade to take possession of Detroit. Colonel Johnson having joined the army, the movement was rapid in pursuit of the enemy. Perry having dispatched several of the small vessels to transport stores and assist with their armament if necessary, and himself volunteered as aid to Harrison. Then followed the battle of the Thames, and the defeat of Proctor and death of Tecumseh. Harrison and Perry now returned to Detroit and issued a joint proclamation, dated Sandwich, October 17th, 1813, saying to the people of Upper Canada, that "all armed resistance having ceased, and the country in the quiet possession of the Americans, that the laws and customs that existed previous to the conquest were hereby declared in force, and the inhabitants guaranteed protection in person and property so long as the district remained in possession of the United States." Harrison also issued a proclamation, dated Detroit, September 29th, 1813, to the inhabitants of Michigan, establishing the laws in force previous to the surrender of Hull, and replacing the officers. After the defeat of Barclay and Proctor, and the death of Tecumseh, the Indians with the British army felt quite humble and disposed for peace.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

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COL. LEWIS CASS was now installed civil and military governor of Michigan, with his brigade, one thousand strong, as also to hold that portion of Canada just captured.

The volunteers under Governor Shelby, and such portions of the militia as were not needed, were now disbanded.

A portion of the squadron were now prepared to transport the remainder of the army to the lower end of the lake, to assist in the operations on the Niagara frontier, and were embarked as soon as possible. The "Ohio," "Somers," "Scorpion," "Tigress," and "Porcupine" were left under the supervision of Colonel Lewis Cass to transport prisoners to Camp Portage, and supplies from Cleveland.

A letter awaited the gallant Perry, at Detroit, from the Secretary of the Navy, couched in flattering terms, announcing to him his promotion to the rank of Post Captain, and granting him leave of absence to visit his family in Rhode Island. Nothing now to detain him, Perry took Harrison and staff on board the "Ariel" and sailed. On his way down, called at Put-in-Bay and found Barclay much improved, and able to be moved. Perry now informed Barclay of his success in obtaining a parole for him to return home. The wounded Commodore, with his attending surgeon, was then taken on board the "Ariel," when she sailed for Erie, the rest of the squadron having proceeded on their trip; however, the "Ariel" being a fast sailor, arrived at Erie some hours in advance of the squadron. As she made her appearance off the point of the peninsula the citizens assembled on the bank of the bay, when a salute was fired, as it was presumed the Commodore was on board. Perry and Harrison were received with great enthusiasm on landing, and Perry, with Colonel Gaines, assisted the invalid Barclay up the hill to the shore quarters of Perry. In the evening the village of Erie was in a blaze of rejoicing, though



Perry requested to have no demonstrations made near his quarters, to annoy his unfortunate guest, which was strictly observed, and which grateful attention Barclay duly appreciated. Here the intrepid Perry had built and equipped his vessels, and now he had returned for the *first time* after sailing *with the laurels upon his brow*. His ambition had been satisfied—he had “met the enemy and made them his.”

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## CHAPTER XIX.

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**A**FTER making a hasty visit to view the shattered remains of his gallant old “flagship” in Misery Bay, and memory taking him back to the stirring scenes of the 10th—the still blood-stained deck of his shattered ship, and he, himself, escaping unscathed amid the storm and destruction, he raised his hands and gave thanks to the Preserver of all things. They sailed for Buffalo the next day, Perry bidding a final adieu to Erie, as he never returned. On the 24th the squadron arrived safe at Buffalo, where the troops were landed. Perry now, in an official letter, turned over the command on the Upper Lakes to Elliot, and then pursued his journey east, amid a blaze of rejoicing, to his home in Rhode Island.

The prizes “Detroit” and “Queen Charlotte” being badly cut up, it was deemed inexpedient to try and remove them to

Erie, as the season of navigation was far advanced, and storms prevalent, consequently preparations were made to winter them at Put-in-Bay, with a force to protect them from marauding parties from the Canada shore, when the ice would make. Mr. Champlin, in command of the "Tigress," was sent to Put-in-Bay to assume command, and where he arrived on the 25th of December. He immediately made the necessary arrangements for defense, Col. Cass having sent 200 soldiers from Detroit to assist. Lieut. John Packet was sent up late in the winter, and superseded Champlin in command.

The season of storms being at hand, Elliot ordered a portion of the squadron to Erie, the balance to remain at the lower end of the lake. The "Ariel" and "Chippewa" parted their cables and went ashore at Buffalo, where they went to pieces. The "Trippe" and "Little Belt" were sent to Black Rock to winter, and were burnt by the British when they invaded Black Rock and Buffalo that winter. As soon as the "Ohio" and "Somers" had completed their work under Col. Cass the "Somers" and others went into winter quarters at Put-in-Bay, and the "Ohio" returned to Erie, where she arrived late in December. The vessels at Erie were all moored in Misery Bay, and preparations made for defense, as it was reported the British, exasperated at their late defeats, were determined to cross as soon as the ice made and destroy the shipping and village. However, they never made the attempt, and if they had, would have found Elliot with the vessels and Gen. Mead on land with 4,000 troops, ready to receive them.

## CHAPTER XX.

MUCH has been said by some authors about *anarchy* and *insubordination* existing at the Erie station during the winter of 1813-14. This is erroneous. There was some little clashing between the Perry and Elliot adherents, but not in the slightest degree interfering with subordination.

As the spring opened, things were more quiet; the danger of the enemy crossing upon the ice having now passed away. Elliot, in order to obtain information of the enemy's movements upon the Canada shore, as soon as the ice in the lake would permit, ordered the "Ohio," under the command of Mr. Dobbins, to cruise between Long Point and Erie, to intercept their supplies moving west by water. In the discharge of this duty Mr. Dobbins frequently landed spies upon the Canada shore, and arranged to take them off at certain times. The adventures of one of these spies were truly marvelous. The name is not at hand, but think it was *Prentice*. He had lived in Canada and claimed that he had been *oppressed*, for which he was seeking revenge. His object was, if possible, to capture the mails, and thereby obtain valuable information. He never succeeded in getting a mail which was brought to Erie, though he frequently made captures which he took through the lines to our forces near Fort Erie.

Early in April Elliot received letters from General Harrison and Commodore Chauncey, stating that Mackinaw was short of provisions, and quite defenseless. Chauncey then ordered Elliot to fit out the squadron and endeavor to recapture it.

At last the Navy Department had resolved to make a separate command of the Upper Lakes. The change was judicious, though it should have been made a year before.

“NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 15th, 1814.

“SIR:—The arduous duties and great increase of force on Lake Ontario, together with the interruption of intercourse between the commander-in-chief on that lake and the commander of the squadron on Lake Erie, has rendered it expedient to place the latter under a separate command. Captain Arthur Sinclair is, therefore, appointed to the command of the squadron on Lake Erie, to whom you will communicate all the information you possess, and the arrangements you have made for the future operations of the squadron. You will then, sir, agreeable to your wish expressed in your letter to Commodore Chauncey, of the 19th December last, proceed to Sackett’s Harbor and report yourself to him.

“I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

“WM. JONES.

“*J. D. Elliot, Esq., Commanding U. S. Squadron, Lake Erie.*”

Captain Sinclair arrived on then 25th inst., when Elliot, after turning over the command, as instructed, proceeded to Lake Ontario.

Sinclair was a thorough seaman and meritorious officer. He at once commenced to prepare the squadron for the before-named expedition against Mackinaw, though he found it tedious, as the vessels were much damaged and required extensive repairs, particularly the “Lawrence,” she being a complete wreck. However, he managed to make her quite seaworthy, but he made the “Niagara,” the flagship. Captain Daniel S. Dexter taking command of the “Lawrence.”

Mr. Dobbins was now relieved from cruising duty, and ordered to proceed with the “Ohio,” and stores, to Put-in-Bay,

and assit in fitting out the prizes "Detroit" and "Queen Charlotte," and navigate them to Erie. They arrived about the 1st of May, and after some time were taken over the bar and moored in Misery Bay. The temporary post at Put-in-Bay was then broken up and the troops removed to Detroit.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

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AFTER much difficulty the squadron sailed on the Mackinaw expedition on the 25th of June, and reached Detroit on the 4th of July, where they took on board six hundred troops, under the command of Colonel Croghen. When on their passage up they encountered much difficulty in crossing the St. Clair flats, in consequence of shoal water. On reaching Fort Gratiot they took on board five hundred additional troops, under Colonel Cotgreave and Captain Gratiot, an engineer officer. After visiting several posts on the Canadian side, and finding them abandoned, they sailed for Mackinaw, where they arrived about the 25th of July. Finding the post well fortified, with plenty of troops and a horde of Indians, they made an attempt to take it by landing upon the east side of the island. After a severe brush, in which the gallant Major Holmes was killed, they retreated to the vessels and abandoned the expedition. The squadron then sailed for the lower end of the lake. At Nautawassaga, a block house was destroyed, and caused the enemy to burn the schooner "Nancy." laden with

stores and ammunition for Mackinaw. Lieutenant Worseley, Royal Navy, commanded at this post, who retreated to the interior with his forces. The squadron now sailed on their return, leaving the schooners "Scorpion" and "Tigress," Lieutenant Turner and Sailing Master Champlin in command, to cruise and watch, for the present, the movements of the enemy. Unfortunately, they were both surprised and captured at anchor one night, by a heavy body of troops and Indians in boats. In this unfortunate encounter the gallant young Champlin was severely wounded.

The squadron proceeded on down to Buffalo, conveying a portion of the troops thither. The "Lawrence," however, being in bad condition, having nearly foundered in a blow on Lake Huron, was left at Erie, and went into ordinary. The schooners "Somers," Lieutenant Conklin, and "Ohio," Sailing Master Colwell, were left at the lower end of the lake, while the rest of the squadron returned to Erie. Shortly after the departure of the squadron, a party of the enemy came down along the Canada shore in the night in boats and captured both these schooners while laying at anchor at Fort Erie, thus making four schooners the British had captured since the victory of the 10th of September.

Much has been said and sung in regard to the execution of Sergeant James Bird. The truth is something like this: The writer having heard frequent conversations between the officers in regard to this affair, as also has heard his father, who was an officer attached to the squadron, relate the same. Bird came to Erie with a brigade of volunteers from the interior of the state, was detailed with a squad of men to guard stores in

a small block house at the Cascade, where the large vessels were built. Though in command, he sanctioned the pilfering of the stores he was sent to protect ; and when information was given to the military commander he, with his party, made mutinous demonstrations, but soon were conquered. Lieut. Brooks, of the marines, was recruiting for the squadron, and Bird being a man of pluck, Brooks wished to secure him. Bird, with others, were told that "the offense would be overlooked, provided they would enlist as marines," which they did. Bird served gallantly on board the "Lawrence" during the action, and was wounded. At the time the squadron was preparing for the Mackinaw expedition, Bird was placed with a file of marines to guard the Government store, and from where he deserted, taking John Rankin, one of the guards with him. A youngster belonging to Erie was on his way to school at Washington, Penn'a, on horseback, having spent his vacation at home, and passed the two men at a tavern near Butler. Having seen the men while on duty at the store, he knew them. He pushed on his journey, and soon met Sailing Master Colwell with a draft of seamen in wagons, destined for Erie to join the squadron, and to whom the youngster gave the information. Colwell sent a party in advance in disguise, captured, and brought them to Erie. They, with a sailor named John Davis, who had deserted a number of times, and committed other offenses, were tried by court martial on board the "Niagara," while on the passage of the squadron to Detroit. They were all three condemned to death. Efforts were made to have Bird's sentence commuted to imprisonment, in consequence of his gallantry in the action of the 10th of Sep-

tember, but without success. The President claimed that "he had deserted from off his post while in charge of a guard, in time of war, therefore, must suffer as an example for others." They were all three executed on board the "Niagara" while at anchor in the roadstead at Erie, in October, 1814.

The enemy having nothing, comparatively, in the shape of a "flotilla,"—in fact but a few small craft, which seldom ventured beyond their harbors,—our squadron consequently done but little cruising, making their headquarters at Erie, that, in case of need, it was known where they were to be found. The season of storms soon came round, when they went into winter quarters at Erie, late in November.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

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ON THE 24th of December, 1814, peace was declared between the United States and Great Britain, and matters began to be quieted down. In July, 1815, an order was forwarded from Washington to dispose of some of the smaller vessels, and sink the "Detroit," "Queen Charlotte," and "Lawrence," in some suitable place in the harbor, for preservation. Mr. Dobbins received an order to supervise the sinking, which order was fully complied with, and the three sunk side and side in Misery Bay. The "Niagara" being kept afloat as a sort of receiving ship.

An incident occurred in connection with the sinking which



smacked a little of the marvelous, and which was the origin of jokes and comments. The "Lawrence" was moored upon the west or out side of the other two, and notwithstanding her supposed safe moorings, shifted her berth, though *against* a current, round athwart the sterns of the other vessels. She was again brought back to her moorings, but shifted back *again*, though additional security had been added. It was said in commenting, that she was determined to get a *raking position*, etc.

In 1820 an order was received from Washington reducing the station. In 1825 it was entirely broken up and the property disposed of at auction. The "Lawrence," "Detroit," "Queen Charlotte," and "Niagara" were purchased by a Mr. Brown, of Rochester, and subsequently sold to Captain George Miles, of Erie, in 1836, who raised the three vessels, intending to fit them up for the merchant service. He found the two prizes in tolerable condition, but the "Lawrence" so badly riddled she would require docking and a thorough repair. Besides, she was too shallow in the hold for a merchant vessel of her size, being but nine feet—therefore was allowed to sink again to her watery grave, and there she should ever have rested—the waters of the lake on which she had gained her glorious renown surrounding her shattered hull. But the cupidity of man must bring her to the surface again, to be gazed upon by unsympathizing eyes, her splintered timbers cut up into fragments for relics, and her identity lost.

What remains of the gallant old hulk has been cut into pieces and transported via railroad to Philadelphia, where it has been put together and is now on exhibition at the Centennial grounds.

In closing this little historical work the author would say to his readers that it was got up hastily for disposition at the Centennial, where all, who, in taking a last look at the "Lawrence," may obtain a history of her glorious career.

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### TITLE OF THE PARTIES OWNING.

Bill of sale from Benjamin H. Brown, of Rochester, New York, to A. Q. D. Leech, (who transferred to George Miles) of "Lawrence," "Niagara," "Detroit," and "Queen Charlotte," said bill of sale being made to George Miles separately, bearing date as per acknowledgment, June 20th, 1835.

(Signed,

B. H. BROWN.

Acknowledgment by Geo. Mumford, Commissioner Deeds.

Letter of Colonel Thomas Forster, Collector of Customs for the District of Presqu' ile (Erie), to the Secretary of the Navy, in regard to any claim the Government might have to said vessels. The inquiry being made for information enabling the Collector to grant papers to the brig "Queen Charlotte," then to be fitted out for the merchant service, bearing date April 7th, 1835.

(Signed)

THOS. FORSTER, Collector.

Also answer of Mahlon Dickinson, Secretary of the Navy, disclaiming any interest of the Government in said vessels, bearing date April 23d, 1835.

Also transfer of all right, title and interest of George Miles in said vessels to Leander Dobbins, bearing date December 9th, 1857.

(Signed)

GEO. MILES.

Also transfer of hulk of "Lawrence" to Thomas J. Viers and John Dunlap, bearing date September 10th, 1875.

(Signed)

LEANDER DOBBINS.











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